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# Kent on Sunday

www.kentnews.co.uk September 14, 2014

East Edition No 625

## TRANSPORT »

### Southeastern gets four more years

Commuter surprise at Government decision

## POLITICS »

### Party's fingers on pulse of the NHS

Examining the latest political group vying for election triumph

## COMMERCE »

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# Kent on Sunday

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## After the planes, it's now all about trains and automobiles

THERE is something of a transport theme to this weekend's edition - but we make no apology as if there's one thing that gets under the county's skin it is planes, trains and automobiles. Just ask Boris Johnson.

For anyone who has found themselves at the mercy of South-eastern's train services over the years, the chances are you will have formed a strong opinion about the company.

For many, that will be positive. After all, the high speed services have transformed travel times to London for those in the county lucky enough to be able to access them.

But for every happy customer, the chances are there will be three who have tales of delays, disruption and an overall sense of disgruntlement.

Of course, it's very much part of the national obsession to

moan about the trains rather than praise them.

Yet there is no denying Southeastern's ability to cling on to its contract will leave many scratching their heads. Especially those who board a packed train and find themselves paying several thousand pounds for the privilege of standing.

Staying with head-scratching issues, we cast the spotlight on the Sheppey Crossing and ask just why some safety steps have not been taken on a road which has seen some horrendous incidents over the last year?

And if that's not enough, we also take a look at fresh proposals for a M20 lorry park.

Something which will come as a great relief to those who often find lay-bys and streets blocked by big lorries - or, indeed, the HGV driver who used one woman's garden as a temporary toilet.

Have a good weekend.



Editor **Chris Britcher**

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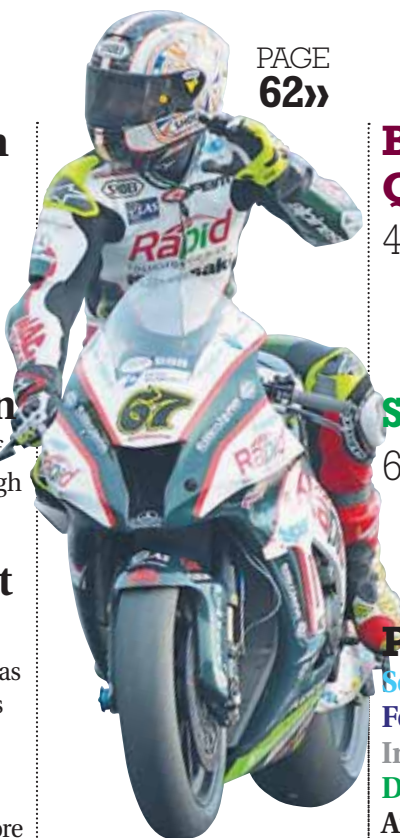
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## Anger as Southeastern is handed further rail deal

By Jamie Weir

jamie.weir@archant.co.uk

COMMUTERS will see their trains operated by Southeastern for at least another four years, after the firm secured an extension to run the service.

But it has been given a stark warning by Government chiefs: improve punctuality and customer services or we'll pull the plug.

In securing the deal, the company says it is committed to £70million of fresh investment in the service over the four year term, which runs from October 12 this year to June 24, 2018.

It also means it will continue to run services during the major disruption at London Bridge as it undergoes a multi-million pound redevelopment. That work is due to finish too in 2018.

Tunbridge Wells Tory MP Greg Clark said: "This agreement is a missed opportunity and, having received poor service over many years, I believe rail passengers deserve much better."

Tristan Osborne, Labour's candidate in the next General Election for Chatham, added: "This franchise has consistently



**CONTRACT:** Southeastern has won a four-year extension to run Kent's train services until 2018

performed poorly when it comes to customer satisfaction and redress."

The Go-Ahead group, which owns Southeastern, however, welcomed the new contract.

Chief executive David Brown, said: "This is an endorsement of our record of delivering improving train services, record investment in the route network, better customer service and strong passenger growth over the last eight years."

Rail minister, Claire Perry, who

oversaw the process, said: "I know passengers on this route haven't always received the service that they deserve, which is why I am absolutely determined that today marks a fresh start for the Southeastern franchise."

"This decision has been taken to ensure that the franchise can genuinely improve its services against a challenging backdrop of vital improvements to the tracks and stations on which their trains operate."

"Given these challenges, we believe that continuing the franchise rather than entering into a new one at this point will provide passengers with the best service for the next three years as well as offering the best value to all of us who help fund the railway through our taxes."

"My job, and the job of the department, is now to make sure that Southeastern delivers."

**Share your views. Email editorial@kosmedia.co.uk**

## Proposal for libraries to be run by a charitable trust to save more cash

MAJOR plans to modernise the county's libraries, by establishing a charitable trust to take over their running, were revealed on Friday.

In what would be one of the most dramatic steps in Kent County Council's examination of services it can outsource in order to meet a drop in central government funding, the proposal will be discussed by council chiefs on Tuesday – and then put out to public consultation.

It would see the libraries, registration and archives services currently provided directly by KCC, shifted to a non-profit making trust.

KCC would remain accountable for the services, but the trust would handle day-to-day running.

It would be contracted to continue to provide its existing services to all Kent residents, with free access to books and ICT facilities, while also maintaining the historic archives.

Mike Hill, cabinet member for community services at KCC, said: "Over the last few years we have made major capital investments of

some £30m into the library service.

"Our libraries, registration and archive service benefits hundreds of thousands of residents each year and we want to make sure these benefits continue to be realised."

"Moving to a trust model would give us the opportunity to modernise the service and provide improvements for the benefit of residents."

"The trust model has worked successfully in other authorities, including Suffolk, and we take great confidence from the positive signs shown by the Suffolk Libraries Trust, which show that a trust model can be a really positive option for the community and exciting opportunity for the service."

He stressed no firm decision had yet been taken, and the results of a subsequent 12-week public consultation into the proposals would be fully taken into account.

To have your say, visit [www.kent.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.kent.gov.uk/libraries) or complete the questionnaire available in all of the county's libraries.

## Police face IPCC probe into circumstances around death

AN INVESTIGATION has been launched by the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) into contact between Kent Police and a 25-year-old woman leading up to her death.

Lora Snelgrove had been arrested and taken into custody at Medway police station at 10.35am on August 22. During her detention she became unwell, and staff were advised by the custody nurse that

she should be taken to accident and emergency. She was transferred to Medway Maritime Hospital at 1pm and died soon after.

A post-mortem into her death proved inconclusive and further tests are being carried out.

The IPCC is investigating the circumstances of the arrest, transportation and detention of Ms Snelgrove up to the time that medical staff took over her care.

## Work begins on reviving the Scenic Railway rollercoaster

WORK to restore Britain's oldest surviving rollercoaster to its former glory starts next week marking another significant milestone for Margate's re-born Dreamland amusement park.

From Monday, work gets under way to restore the iconic Grade II\* listed Scenic Railway, which will form a key part of the heritage attraction the site is being transformed into.

The wooden ride was badly damaged in a fire in 2008, but will be brought back into use again when the park re-opens next year under the leadership of the Dreamland Trust.

Eddie Kemsley, project director at Dreamland, said: "This is an important milestone in Dreamland's history and is symbolic of the enormous achievement of the 'Save Dreamland' campaign."



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## Jail after 700 child abuse images found on PC

A SEX offender who downloaded more than 700 child abuse images has been jailed for two years.

Stephen Thompson, 35, of Highland Road, Maidstone, was arrested last April for breaking the terms of a sexual offences order preventing him from owning any devices capable of accessing the internet.

While on remand at HMP Elmley, police discovered 733 child abuse images of children aged seven to 14 on

a laptop computer seized from Thompson's home.

Thompson pleaded guilty to breaking the order and to six counts of making indecent photographs of children. He was sentenced this week at Maidstone Crown Court.

Detective Constable David Taft said: "Stephen Thompson failed to learn his lesson and has again contributed to the abuse of innocent children."



**RIP:** Sir Donald Sinden

## Family mourn loss of acting legend Sinden

TRIBUTES have been paid to the actor Sir Donald Sinden who died this week at his home in Tenterden.

He had suffered from prostate cancer for several years, his family confirmed. He was 90.

The star of stage and screen enjoyed a long career with his film debut in 1953's *The Cruel Sea*.

In addition to performing for the Royal Shakespeare Company since the 1960s, he also had hits on the small screen in shows such as *Never the Twain* and *Two's Company*. Legend has it between 1942 and 2008 he was out of work for just five weeks.

His son, Marc Sinden, said: "My father has finished dying. He suffered for a few years from prostate cancer which slowly spread.

"Even though his death was expected, it is still a huge loss to his family and we, his brother, his son, his four grandchildren and great-grandchild will all miss his humour and knowledge.

"We would all like to share our appreciation for the Pilgrims Hospice and the carers that looked after him and us with such dignity, consideration and care until the end."

Mr Sinden's family have started to make plans for a memorial service to remember the actor.

## MP: We need a ten per cent pay hike to get the best to embrace politics

**By Chris Murphy**

editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

POLITICIANS around the county have spoken out against plans to increase their pay by an inflation-busting ten per cent - but at least one believes they are worth every penny.

With an independent body set up to decide on the pay of MPs at Westminster - the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority - it has said wages after the next election ought to leap from a basic of £67,000 to £74,000.

It sparked criticism from many, including the unions, who pointed out that the national trend for pay rises is currently just one per cent.

The three main party leaders have all attacked the proposed rise, saying it will further erode public confidence in Westminster - still scarred by the expenses scandal.

Sittingbourne and Sheppey Conservative MP Gordon Henderson said: "It is wrong of Ipsa to propose a pay rise at a time when other public



**PAY ROW:** Houses of Parliament

sector workers are getting no more than one per cent.

"If Ipsa genuinely believes that MPs should be paid a higher salary then perhaps it would be better for them to phase that rise in over a

longer period."

Dover and Deal Tory MP Charlie Elphicke added: "The people proposing these pay changes are hopelessly out of touch. It's not right to make any changes until things get better and real wages rise for everyone."

Julian Brazier, Conservative MP in Canterbury, added: "Ipsa is obliged under statute to hold a review of its decision after the General Election. They should use this opportunity to think again."

North Thanet Tory Roger Gale, however, backs the rise. He said: "I do fear that unless future MPs are properly remunerated then Parliament will become the playground of those with private means while the kind of people, from all walks of life, that a good democracy really needs will simply not come forward to give up careers in order to devote the necessary 80-hours a week to life as a Member of Parliament."

Marcial Boo, chief executive at Ipsa, said: "We want to have good people doing the job and they need to be paid fairly."

## Youngsters sit new 'tutor-proof' 11-plus

THOUSANDS of youngsters across the county got to grips with the all-new Kent Test this week in a bid to secure a place at one of the county's grammar schools.

The test has been given an overhaul in a bid to make them more 'tutor-proof'.

It comes amid concerns parents were getting their youngsters extra private tuition in order to be able to tackle the test successfully.

With Year 6 pupils not given the opportunity to practice in class, it was making a mockery of grammar education promoting social mobility.

The revised test was sat on Wednesday. The results will be emailed out to parents on October 15.

The Medway Test, for those under the unitary authority, takes place this week.

Securing the pass mark - achieved by around 20 per cent of youngsters - suggest students would be suitable for a grammar school and can apply for a place. It does not guarantee a berth.

## Head appointed for Sandwich secondary

TRACEY Savage has been appointed headteacher of Sandwich Technology School - taking over the post on January 1, 2015.

Mrs Savage is currently deputy head at Ashford boys' grammar, the Norton Knatchbull.

She replaces Veronica Gomez who is retiring at the end of the year.

Chair of governors, Bruce Eccles, said: "She impressed with her enthusiasm, passion and commitment all of which is underpinned by a clear understanding of the challenges that face our young people in the 21st century."

Mrs Savage added: "As someone born and bred in south east Kent I have been aware of the school's excellent reputation for years and during my interview and other visits I have had the friendly, hardworking and committed nature of both the students and staff confirmed.

"I am very much looking forward to the challenge of leading the school on through these times of educational reform."

## Big delays as the A2 set for 'rebuilding'

A PUBLIC exhibition takes place on Tuesday, outlining major roadworks to the busy A2 at Canterbury which are set to cause closures.

A six-mile stretch of the road, between Brenley Corner, where the road meets the M2, and Wincheap, for the A28, will be rebuilt.

This will involve nine weekend closures of the coastbound carriageway. Work is due to start on October 3 and be completed by December 1.

The exhibition, staged by the Highways Agency, takes place at Boughton under Blean Village Hall on September 16, between 4pm and 6pm. Members of the team involved in the work will be on hand to answer questions from residents and motorists.

The Highways Agency's John Henderson said: "This is more than the usual overnight resurfacing; we will be rebuilding the carriageway base and this requires more time. We considered other options, such as using a contraflow, but the weekend closures had the least impact."



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# Candid commissioner ready to answer your most probing questions

KENT on Sunday is giving our readers the chance to put their questions directly to Kent's Police and Crime Commissioner Ann Barnes.

Mrs Barnes has never strayed far from the headlines since she was elected to the post in November 2012.

And now you can put your questions directly to her – with no topic out of bounds.

In her role as the county's first ever crime commissioner, she is tasked with overseeing the chief constable and holding him to account in delivering policing across Kent, while also overseeing funding.

She has no say on operational matters – those decisions remain firmly with the chief constable.

But she is certainly influential within a force facing some of the most damaging cuts in recent history, and the public's continued fear of crime and desire to see more 'Bobbies on the beat'.

As an independent candidate, she has certainly managed to raise the awareness of

a position which has attracted many critics since being introduced by the Coalition to provide an individual accountable for the police force.

Since being elected, she's had some notable victories, including the establishment of a round-the-clock Sexual Assault Referral Centre in Maidstone, and has recently put pressure on the Prime Minister to stop the Kent taxpayer having to foot the bill for the renewal of fire arm licences.

Her two-year spell in charge has not been without incident, however.

Problems over the appointment of Paris Brown as her youth commissioner, and a misjudged Channel 4 documentary which set out to look at the role, but ended up making Mrs Barnes something of a figure of fun, has blotted her copy book.

One thing she has certainly achieved is to ensure the public know who she is and the role she holds.

As the previous high-on invisible head of the Kent Police Authority – which the office



**QUESTION TIME:**  
Ann Barnes will open up to KoS readers

of commissioner replaced – she has become a visible presence.

Now she has vowed to answer our readers openly and honestly.

All you need to do is email, tweet or write to us with your question. We'll then select the best and most probing and put them to Mrs Barnes in person.

All the responses will be published in a future edition of Kent on Sunday.

To put your question to Mrs Barnes, simply email [editorial@kosmedia.co.uk](mailto:editorial@kosmedia.co.uk) and put in the subject line 'Ann Barnes Q&A'. Or, alternatively, email them to The Editor, KoS, Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford

TN25 1PP. All questions must be received no later than noon on September 30. Alternatively, you can tweet your question to us on Twitter – see below for details.

## PUT YOUR QUESTION TO ANN BARNES...

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In the past 12 months it has seen a 130-car pile-up and the death of a mother and her son, but despite big concerns nothing has been done to improve safety on the Sheppey Crossing, writes **Sarah Linney**

**A**LITTLE over a year ago news started to filter through of a multiple car smash during the morning rush hour on the busy A249 Sheppey Crossing.

At first more than a dozen cars were reported involved, colliding in thick fog... but the number kept rising.

In total, some 130 vehicles ended up involved in what would become one of the country's biggest ever car crashes.

And although, remarkably, no-one was killed, there was a major call for safety measures on the bridge – that links Sheppey to the mainland – to be increased.

The eight left seriously injured and 200 injured were a clear sign, said concerned voices, something should be done.

Ten months on, and the bridge was in the news once again. This time a van and car had collided on the bridge with tragic consequences.

Debbie Roberts, 42, and her eight-year-old son, Marshall, were both killed. Once again, there was a clamour for action to be taken.

In the wake of the tragedy, a petition calling for safety measures on the bridge, Make Sheppey Bridge Safe To Cross, attracted almost 3,000 signatures.

But still nothing has been done.

The bridge, which has a 70mph speed limit yet no hard shoulder or lighting, remains defiantly unchanged.

What's more, the concerns are nothing new.

At the planning stage of the bridge, various concerns from senior figures were voiced.

Among them was then-Chief Constable Mike Fuller. In a letter he wrote to then-transport secretary Alastair Darling expressing concerns and calling for the speed limit to be reduced.

It is understood lighting was not included on cost grounds.

However, growing support for improvements to the bridge may force them to reconsider their position after the local council's transportation committee in Swale recommended an urgent lowering of the speed limit.

The Swale Joint Transportation Board, a committee of county and borough councillors which advises on transport issues, made a formal recommendation on Monday the speed limit be reduced to 50mph and average speed cameras be placed at either end of the bridge.

Leysdown and Warden councillor Pat Sandle proposed the move in a letter read out at the meeting.

She said: "Following the massive pile-up last year and the recent tragic accident, I had many calls from people to do something.

"I travel this route on a daily basis and I do travel at 70mph when road conditions permit. But I am constantly overtaken by vehicles doing at least 80mph or 90mph.

"If a car had broken down on the far side of the bridge you would be on it before you could stop.

"I do believe a reduction in speed from before the bridge, going towards and from Cowstead Corner (the A2500), together with the installation of speed cameras, would make this road much safer.

"This option would not cost millions but could save many lives."



**BRIDGE OF SIGHS:** Nothing has been done to improve safety on Sheppey Crossing since the 130-car pile-up last year that left hundreds of people injured

# Chorus of safety demands in bid to ease concerns over notorious Sheppey bridge

She pointed to several examples of roads where reducing the speed limit had cut the number of accidents, including the B2231 on Sheppey between Leysdown and Eastchurch.

Mike Baldock, Kent County Council's shadow cabinet member for highways and Ukip ward member for Swale West, was at the meeting.

"There are two lanes, so if you do break down there's nowhere safe to pull over. There are no emergency phones and no lights," he said.

"There isn't the opportunity to reduce the speed limit in fog – there are no panels which could show a temporary limit.

"If you are going too fast behind someone on any road you will go into the back of them, but the problem with the Sheppey bridge is that when

you are coming from Sheppey to Sittingbourne it curves in, so you can't see the whole length of the road. So if you have broken down on the inside of the curve, someone is on you quite quickly before they can see you.

"The QEII Bridge at Dartford is straight, so you can see what's ahead of you, as is every other bridge I can think of.

"There should have been a full review after last year's crash that looked at the speed limit and what other measures could be put in. Not having that serious review, I think, is very alarming."

Campaigner James Morrison has been calling for increased safety measures on the bridge for five years.

He has approached not only councillors and the police but has written to David Cameron, Nick Clegg and Ed Miliband.

"I have been asking for lighting, information panels, and a gate system on the bridge at either end, like on level crossings, so that if there is a breakdown the gates can be shut," he told Kent on Sunday.

"People are being killed, and people are blaming everyone but themselves. Nobody is standing up and taking ownership of anything. I got very angry when the mother and son were killed – I could see the state of the road and I thought, someone has to stand up and be counted.

"When you come from the Sheppey

side and you look up you can't see the other side of the road. It's been nicknamed the highway to heaven because the road seems to go straight up into the sky.

"If a car breaks down on the other side you haven't got a hope in hell. There's nowhere you can wheel it to – you are on the main carriageway."

**B**oard vice-president Mike Whiting proposed the motion recommending the changes.

The board can only make recommendations, not decisions, but Kent County Council cabinet member for transport David Brazier is expected to make the recommendation at his next meeting with the Highways Agency, which is responsible for major trunk roads, including the A249.

"There have been a lot of members of the public saying nothing has happened since the accident a year ago – there has not been anything published in the public domain," said Cllr Whiting, who is also the Swale council ward member for Kemsley.

"There was a lot of support in the chamber for Cllr Sandle's suggestion and we felt that we should push this forward. Whether it is the most perfect answer, I don't know because we are not experts, but something needs to be done.

"The Highways Agency continually say the road is safe and built to the

correct standard. But this is a case where the process says something is black, but reality shows it to be white."

However, the Highways Agency shows no sign of bowing to the pressure for safety measures on the road.

It said in a statement: "Safety is a top priority for the Highways Agency.

"The Kent Police investigation into the crash on the Sheppey Crossing last year found the cause of the collision to be fog and a number of motorists not driving appropriately for the conditions. This has not led to any report being created as their evidence speaks for itself.

"However we are not complacent and continually monitor safety on the A249, as we do for all our roads."

But the argument that people just need to drive more carefully didn't wash with either Cllr Baldock or Cllr Whiting.

"Just saying that people should drive more carefully isn't really a solution," Cllr Baldock said. "Why should those who are driving safely and appropriately be put at risk?

"Saying that is like saying that people who drive recklessly should have the rights of the road.

"If it isn't a road where 70mph is safe, it shouldn't be a 70mph road.

Cllr Whiting agreed. "It obfuscates the issue," he said. "People do drive too fast, so how do you stop them? You need a speed limit."

**“There should have been a full review after last year's crash that looked at the speed limit and safety. Not having that was very alarming”**

**Mike Baldock**, Shadow cabinet member for highways at KCC

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**R**ESIDENTS dogged by lorry drivers parking on verges and defecating in lay-bys are keeping their fingers crossed a network of lorry parks proposed this week could finally bring an end to a problem which continues to haunt the county's streets.

On Wednesday, Kent County Council's environment and transport cabinet committee will meet at County Hall to discuss the plans, designed to ease the suffering of HGVs parking in residential and industrial areas.

The problem has been particularly acute in the east of the county, as traffic heads to and from the port towns. But with drivers obliged by law to take rest periods of certain times – to ensure they do not drive when tired – they have to find somewhere to park.

But with few authorised lorry parks, which are often filled to capacity, many, instead head onto industrial estates or lay-bys to pull up for the night.

And with no facilities it often means after they leave, bottles of urine and human faeces are found on our roadside.

Christine Drury is the chairman of Westwell Parish Council, near Ashford. She has had first-hand experience of the problem of drivers parking their vehicles in lay-bys.

Her house is close to the A20, with a lay-by in front of it.

Two years ago, she told KoS that she had found a lorry driver defecating in her garden. The situation, she said this week, has still not changed.

She said: "The problem is still just as bad as it ever was; maybe even slightly worse. Nothing has been done about the issue, and the lay-by is still littered with bottles of urine and other assorted detritus."

"This problem is one of driver welfare. The drivers don't want to stop, and end up going to the toilet in a lay-by, but there's nowhere else for these men to go."

"There is a serious shortage in capacity which means that the lay-bys end up being the only place for them. Something needs to be done now, not in three years time."

KCC clearly hope to relieve some of the situation with the commercially run sites being proposed, as well as providing an overflow for when Operation Stack is implemented.

Although rarely used, Stack turns the M20 into a lorry park when there are delays getting into the ports. But it then puts enormous pressure on the rest of the county's road network. It is hoped this could prevent the M20 between junctions eight and nine – Maidstone to Ashford – having to become blocked.

David Brazier is KCC cabinet member with the transport portfolio.

He explained: "Being home to both

**“ This problem is one of driver welfare. The drivers don't want to stop and end up going to the toilet in a lay-by, but there's nowhere else for these men to go ”**

**Christine Drury**, chairman of Westwell Parish Council

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# Crunch talks set to drive forward lorry park network

**Jamie Weir** reports on the long-running problem of lay-bys being used by HGV drivers as toilets and plans to curb this



**DRIVING THEM MAD:** Christine Drury, left, and Natalie Chapman want more to be done to help lorry drivers

the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel, Kent is the UK's front door to Europe for road freight, with nearly 90 per cent of all heavy goods vehicles travelling between the UK and continental Europe doing so via the county.

"This movement of goods and materials is vital to the UK's economy but does create a number of issues for Kent's residents."

"One particular issue that generates a sizeable number of complaints is that of HGVs parking in inappropriate locations, say near residential areas, and the resulting noise, nuisance, litter and anti-social behaviour."

The sites identified are adjacent to the Stop24 stop at junction 11 of the M20 at Westenhanger, land adjacent to the Ashford International Truck-stop and the White Cliffs Business Park in Dover.

Following Wednesday's meeting a preferred option will be selected allowing plans to push ahead.

But Shepway District Council lashed out at the Westenhanger option.

Leader David Monk said of the

300-space lorry park proposal: "I do not support KCC's proposal for a new lorry park at Westenhanger. Our objections have not been taken into account and these will be made again to KCC in the strongest possible terms."

Whatever option taken, it is clear more fights will be waged.

It is thought the parks could be complete by 2018, with funding coming from external sources – thus easing the strain on taxpayers.

**B**etter late than never, many will say.

Christine Drury added: "These lorries are high-tech vehicles. They have systems which show them where they are allowed to park, and where they are not. If the capacity was there, they would use it."

And it isn't just Ashford being blighted by lorries parking in the wrong places. Labour councillor in Dartford, Matt Bryant, says that the issue creates a significant impact in his area.

He said: "Residents have become

resigned to the fact that this is an ongoing issue. They just park up wherever they can, leave litter and relieve themselves."

"The problem needs a countywide solution. A new lorry park must be built."

And that's a sentiment which is echoed by the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) – the member body for parish councils in Kent.

Spokesman for the organisation, Terry Martin, said: "We have had a number of member parish councils reporting the problem to us."

"Creating more spaces is probably the answer to stop any inappropriate parking in villages and lay-bys."

Natalie Chapman, the head of policy at the Freight Transport Association (FTA) – the trade association which represents freight transport – told KoS: "We fully sympathise with residents who are having problems with drivers parking in lay-bys near then. This certainly isn't the choice of the driver."

She points to the legal obligation of

**“ We sympathise with residents who are having problems with drivers parking in lay-bys near then. This certainly isn't the choice of the driver ”**

**Natalie Chapman**, head of policy at the Freight Transport Association

rest periods having to be observed by drivers.

The EU places restrictions on the number of hours lorry drivers are able to drive without taking a break. All drivers must take daily rest of at least 11 hours. They also need to take a total of at least 45 hours of weekly rest. During the day, drivers must take at least 45 minutes rest for every 4.5 hours they drive.

She says: "Driving even one minute over or cutting a rest break by one minute is classed as an infringement for which drivers can be picked up on up to 28 days later via their tachograph records [which monitor distances and times travelled]."

"They need proper rest stops because they don't have any choice but to take a break."

"Lorry drivers are suffering, local people are suffering, and enough is enough. There needs to be a better way of doing this in the 21st century."

**M**any lorry drivers coming from the Continent are preferring to park up in Kent rather than in France for fear migrants will attempt to gain illegal entry to the UK by stowing away. It all adds to the problem.

Christine Drury, from Westwell Parish Council, highlighted another serious issue with lorries not having the correct facilities.

She said: "We are seeing greater numbers of chiller trucks on the roads. These vehicles need to keep their loads cool, and the only way to do that if they aren't at a properly serviced stop is to keep their engines on. This obviously creates noise and also pollution."

"If there was a proper rest stop with services provided, they would simply be able to plug into that and there would be no issue."

Ms Chapman told KoS that where these parks have been provided, they are excellent.

She said: "There's a really great park in Ashford which is really well used by drivers, but there need to be more of these."

"The problem is that when sites for new lorry parks are identified, local opposition springs up."

"That means that although many councils recognise there's a problem, they are reluctant to actually build a new lorry park. It's certainly not going to be a vote winner."

The Ashford site is already oversubscribed. A Department for Transport (DfT) report revealed that it was constantly between 75 per cent and 100 per cent full when a survey was conducted in 2011.

Other areas in the county with lorry parking facilities were also at very high levels of capacity.

Swale was highlighted in the DfT report as a parking blackspot, with 83 vehicles found parked up in lay-bys.



# Time to embark on a better journey

Rail minister **Claire Perry** explains some of the background behind the controversial decision to hand train operator Southeastern a four-year extension to run its services across the county, despite concerns over its previously poor record

**W**HAT often gets lost in the back and forth between politicians in Westminster is what a new rail contract actually means for customers – the real winners or losers behind these decisions – and I know ministers can seem far removed from the day-to-day issues passengers grapple with.

Granting the contract to Southeastern is in the best interests of the people that use this service; it will mean £70 million investment, thousands of extra seats and better services between key destinations.

my first priority was to ensure the chosen operator understood the network well enough to minimise disruption for your journeys at a time of great change.

Southeastern has run these services since 2006, dealt well with service changes during the Olympics, and clearly meet that criteria.

I did not feel a new operator, with no experience of the route, would give you the reliability that you need.

Unlike the current franchise agreement that was let in 2006, this contract includes significantly reduced subsidies from you the taxpayer.

I am well aware the network needs to up its game – it hasn't always provided the service you rightly expect.

Part of this is due to the huge amount of engineering work arising from major investment by the government in new rail lines, improved signalling and revamped stations, after years of under-investment.

This work does have an impact on services; many of you will have recently been asked to re-route your journeys due to a nine-day blockade of London Bridge station for example, which is part of a major programme to unblock north to south trains across London, providing many more through-London services for those living outside the capital and a station that will be one of the best in London with a concourse the size of the pitch at Wembley Stadium.

Given the scale of the work already under way,

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I have also ensured the terms of the contract will ensure the Department for Transport can hold Southeastern to its promises.

A new managing director is in place to set this new direction.

Last week we also announced an end to above inflation fare rises, meaning a real-term fares freeze on regulated fares for this year and next.

I am determined this is a fresh start, a new deal for customers which is based on trust.

If this is failing to translate into real improvements on the ground, I want to know about it: [claire.perry@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:claire.perry@dft.gsi.gov.uk) or @[claire4devizes](https://twitter.com/claire4devizes) on Twitter.

■ **Claire Perry** is a Conservative MP for Devizes in Wiltshire. In July she was appointed parliamentary under-secretary of state for transport, with responsibility for rail fares, rail franchising, freight and logistics and transport agencies.

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Pictures and front cover image: EPIC ACTION IMAGERY

# No obstacle is too tough for this new sport

Extreme obstacle racing is rapidly gathering fans across the county, **Maria Chiorando** finds out why

**S**WIMMING through filthy bogs, scaling nine-foot walls and trail running up the steepest hills may not be most people's idea of fun, but they are some of the key disciplines in what is becoming one of the fastest growing sporting activities - extreme obstacle racing.

Already proving a hit across the UK, it is now taking Kent by storm, with regular events taking place in the east and west of the county, and both regularly pulling in hundreds of competitors.

The races are certainly not for the faint-hearted. The gruelling runs, which can range

anywhere between five to 20 kilometres, involve wading through mud and leaping across various obstacles such as cargo nets, Tarzan bars and 12ft walls.

Yet they are becoming as much a social event as a sporting one, with friends teaming up to take part and have fun as much as getting fit.

Luke Bicknell is a personal trainer and nutritionist from Canterbury. He is a regular competitor and can understand why they are becoming so popular.

He explains: "I think participation in these kind of events is growing because people want to do something more interesting than just running, and these challenges get people to be more adventurous; they also mean you're using your whole body, as there are different obstacles."

"Lots of people like to be challenged. With this kind of race, you don't know what's coming, so there's the element of excitement, and also a bit of fear."

"Another big part of it is that people often do it as a team, there's a great sense of camaraderie involved."

"There are so many of these mud races now, Tough Mudder, Spartan, Dirty Dozen [in Pad-dock Wood] and Beat the Bog, among others."

Thomas Brain is a co-director of Kent-based Beat the Bog, which set its first trial run in May, 2013.

"Interest is growing rapidly," he explains. "Our last event in Canterbury was in April and we had around 400, whereas at a run in October, 2013, we had just over 200."

"We're a bit different to most other events because they are mobile races, moving around to different locations, but we have a permanent course in two locations: Canterbury and Seven-oaks. We are also looking at adding a third location in the future."



KEA

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**CHALLENGING:** Competitors are flocking to extreme obstacle races to not only get fit but to test themselves mentally and physically. Personal trainer Luke Bicknell (centre top) is an obstacle fan

"There certainly is the demand for it in the county, most entrants have been very supportive."

Dan Tuffnell, from Farnborough, is obstacle race company Spartan's UK race director.

It organises three races. A 'sprint' at over 5k, the 'super' at over 12k and the 'beast', which clocks in at a massive 20k plus.

He explains: "People want to break out of their normal lives and routines, which are usually so multi-screen."

"We're looking at computers at work, our smart phones, tablets and televisions, but when you put yourself in an extreme racing situation, how often are you thinking about emails? Not once."

"Our races are named after the Spartan warrior – said to be worth two of any other warrior on the battlefield, and that gives you a real flavour of what these events are about, challenging oneself, pushing yourself, not only physically, but psychologically."

Recently it staged a sprint and super race at Pippingford Park in Uckfield, just over the East Sussex border and a popular destination for competitors from Tunbridge Wells.

It hosts the beast race there on October, 11.

"It is very popular in the UK. I am thrilled with the turnout this year, thousands of people turned out to race in the two events. It was a re-

ally splendid weekend," says Mr Tuffnell.

"We are also finding that obstacle racing is starting to attract a new type of person; the recent races are just starting to feel like nothing that's happened before."

This is something that Doug Spence, race director and co-founder of Dirty Dozen, which hosts events in Paddock Wood, has found.

He says: "Our first race at the Hop Farm was in October, 2013, and we had just over 500 people. We are expecting over 1,000 at the next one at the end of September."

"We offer three distances, 6k, 12k and 18k, and that is so we can appeal to a wide range of people. We have elite athletes running, as well as novices."

"The reason we started Dirty Dozen was to get the everyman interested in fitness. A lot of people know they should be in better shape, but it's hard to get off the sofa and do something about it. Because these races are fun, because you can do them with your mates, there's a reason to train, a reason to get up early on your Sunday and come down and do it."

"Many find that taking control of their fitness in that way empowers them."

One newcomer to the sport is Kate Ford from Staplehurst, who recently ran a 5km Spartan event with her husband Andy.

"We ran because one of our friends did it last

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year and thought it was brilliant, and although I do some fitness, it's usually gym classes and things like that, so this was a totally new experience," she explains.

"It was amazing, we found that everyone was really friendly, and would help if you were struggling to scale the walls, or get out of the water pools.

"I've never done anything like it, and will definitely do it again next year."

Mr Ford adds: "I went through every emotion during the race, excitement, fear, anger, pain.

"It felt like we were never going to reach the finishing line, but when we did, I wanted to do it all over again, as there was something really satisfying about reaching your limits, and then having to push through them."

And this is at the heart of obstacle course racing.

Mr Tuffnell says: "These events are about everyone who's pushing them-

**“ That's the Spartan spirit; doing it to the max. It's also about flow, when you're running, you're not distracted by anything, you're in 'the zone' ”**

**Dan Tuffnell,**

Spartan's UK race director

selves hard, those who don't always take part in extreme events, and manage to get to the finishing line; that's always amazing to see.

"That's the Spartan spirit: doing it to the max. It's also about flow, when you're running, you're not distracted by anything, you're in what's called 'the zone'. There's the thrill of the crowd, you're pushing yourself physically. There's a brilliant community spirit, it's a great feeling.

"There is a buzz, we have spectators at some points, cheering the racers on and getting them through the obstacles."

There are plenty of options to enter these events regularly.

Mr Brain, of Beat the Bog, adds: "We are now looking at having monthly time trials in both Canterbury and Sevenoaks.

"For those who are stronger racers, we'll have longer options of the course, depending on what direction you choose to take.

"There is a really varied mix of people and fitness levels we cater for."

For those who are interested in taking part in this kind of challenge, preparation is key.

"You should mix up what you're doing in your training," says Mr Bicknell.

"You should do some running, and also do circuits with exercises that rely on your own body weight, for example push ups and pull-ups, I recommend that you go to parks and climb up stuff, as well as doing interval training, and make sure you are comfortable running the full distance of the course.

"It's a great thing to get into, a brilliant physical activity. People should definitely do it, just go for it."

Reporter Maria Chiorando is no stranger to the sport - and she recently took part in a 'Spartan' race. As she explains...

AS hundreds jostle on the starting line in anticipation of the gruelling trek ahead, nerves and excitement are palpable.

Some take it seriously - very seriously, with much chest-beating and cries of "I am Spartan!" filling the air as the clock counts down.

The Spartan sprint race is the season opener, over 5k of trail running, 15 obstacles and penalty burpees [a press-up type exercise], it's the 'easiest' of the three distances they offer.

While some call it madness, hundreds are flocking to compete, and it's easy to see why - there's a good mix of challenge, adrenalin and camaraderie.

They are notoriously secretive about the course, so none of the competitors know what to expect.

It starts with an uphill run, the first obstacle is a series of walls to scale. Before long, the trail runs into the forest, where the footing is uneven and muddy, slippery and steep, with lots of waist deep bogs to wade through.

The whole thing becomes a bit of a blur, with physical challenges coming thick and fast. It's a mental challenge as much as physical, and rumour has it the course is designed with this in mind.

Coming on to the home straight,



there are three final obstacles - a spear throw, cargo net and fire jump, where competitors manage to dig deep and find the final

bit of energy to clear.

Much to my surprise it was great fun - little wonder people are getting addicted.

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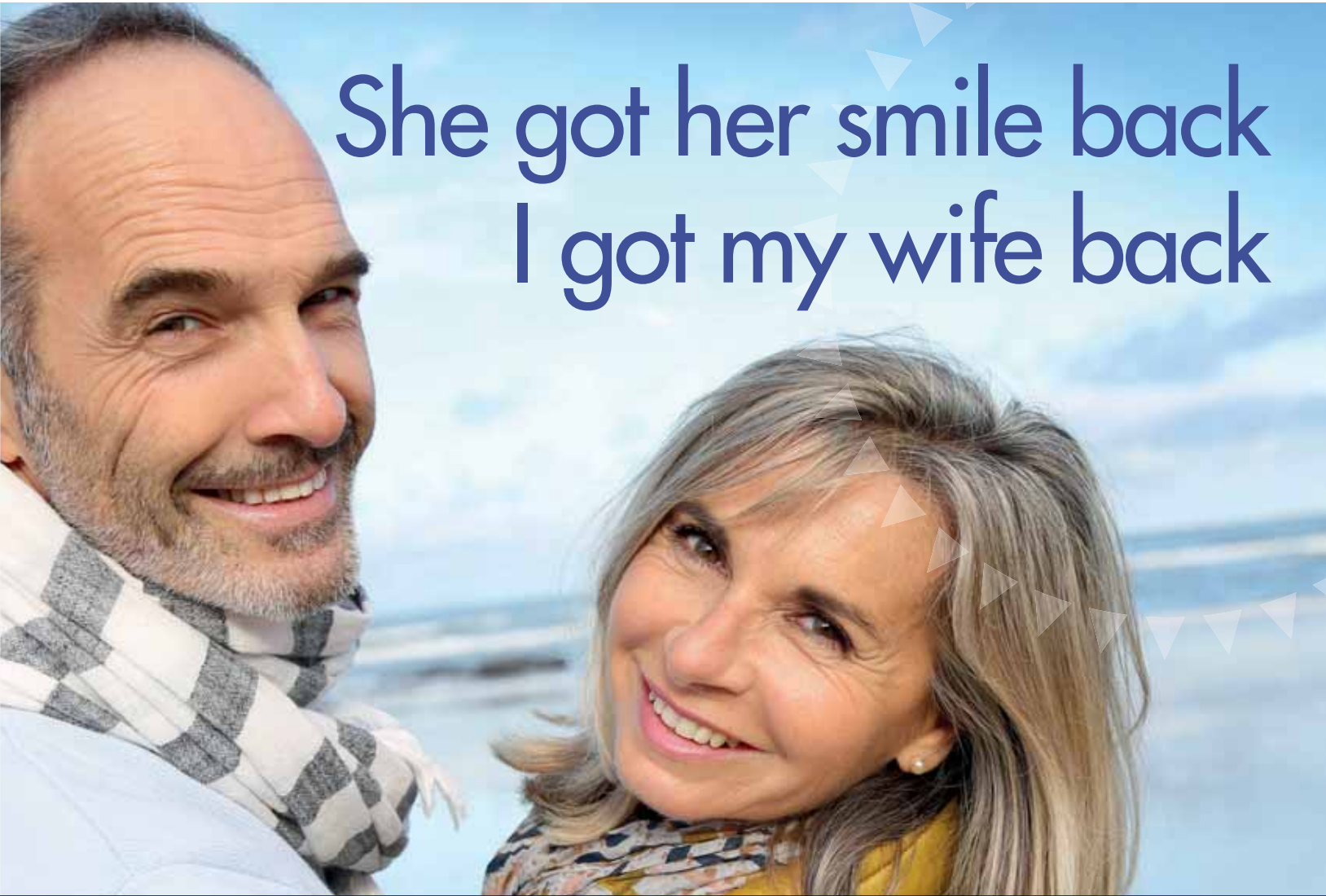
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A photograph of a middle-aged couple smiling at each other on a beach. The man is on the left, wearing a grey and white checkered scarf. The woman is on the right, with grey hair and a yellow top. The background shows a beach and the ocean under a blue sky with some clouds. There are decorative white triangles in the upper right corner.

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# Retired doctor on election trail to save NHS from 'terminal threat'

**“W**E have 240 days left to save the NHS,” Paul Hobday says when we meet at his home in Maidstone. “I counted the days until the election.”

Dr Hobday is a retired doctor. He left his profession early because of what he says successive governments have done to our health service – to the point where he felt the fight to save it had become more important than working in it.

Now he is standing in the General Election for the Maidstone and the Weald seat for the National Health Action Party, created to defend the NHS and its values.

He will be up against Conservative MP Helen Grant, an already well-established challenge from the Liberal Democrats and, no doubt, Ukup.

Dr Hobday ran his own surgery in Sutton Valence for 30 years until he retired last year.

“I had had enough of the privatisation and bureaucracy,” he said.

“I never wanted to work in a system where money influenced my clinical decisions – which is the system that exists pretty much everywhere else in the world.

National Health Action Party candidate Dr Peter Hobday talks to **Sarah Linney** about his reasons for standing in next year’s General Election and his fears for our health care’s future...

“Ours is the only system where there is totally undiluted decision-making done purely in the interests of the patient.

“But I could see a privatised health-care system accelerating towards me like a juggernaut. So I thought I might be more useful trying to save the NHS.

“The need I have to fight the Coalition government’s undemocratic, clandestine privatisation is driven by my anger that the public are being kept in the dark.

“By standing for election I hope to be able to wake the public up to the terminal threat to our NHS.”

The Coalition would, of course, disagree.

The father-of-three qualified at Guy’s Hospital in London in 1979, and back then, he

says, things were different.

“GPs were a patient’s total advocate. Their care was based purely on what they needed, and money didn’t influence the doctor’s decision,” Dr Hobday said.

“Parts of the Right have never liked the NHS, but they realised it was political suicide to try to get rid of it as it is so popular with the public. But the starving of funds began in the 1980s under the Conservatives.

“And the Left haven’t really done much better because they don’t apply the [Nye] Bevan [the driving force behind the creation of the NHS] principles: that healthcare must be comprehensive, universal

and free at the point of use.

“They have really fallen for the competition argument –

which might be true between Tesco and Sainsbury’s, but in medicine we need co-operation, not competition, for the best interests of the patient.

“The Labour Party founded the NHS and claims to be the protector of the NHS, but they have given up the right to call themselves that.”

He says the privatisation which began under Tony Blair – which enshrined, among other things, the right for private companies to run NHS GP surgeries – was a bad move from the start, complicating care and wasting money under the pretext of offering patients a choice that most weren’t interested in.

And he says the situation has steadily worsened.

“In the last 10 years, the market has basically started to dominate clinical care,” Dr Hobday said.

“When I started as a GP, it was simple; there was no mention about money, about spending too much on the prescribing budget or making too

many referrals.

“By the time I finished we were tied up in knots with bureaucracy. There was pressure on us not to refer, not to investigate. We had inspectors coming in and saying we were over-prescribing.”

**A**nd he says this has a direct effect on patient care – because money is now an issue when doctors are making decisions about treatment.

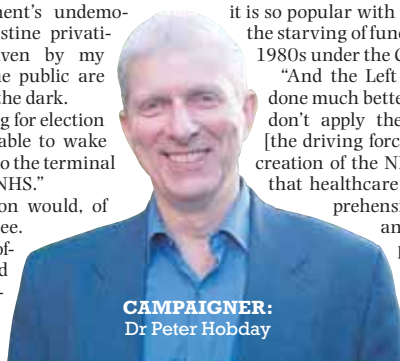
“There’s that question and pressure from the health authorities; are you spending too much, do you really need to do this?” Dr Hobday said.

“Patients have started to realise GPs are being asked to ration care and are beginning to lose their faith in whether their doctor is acting in their best interests.

“If you have a headache and the GP says you don’t need a scan, are they saying it because they believe it or because they have been ordered not to spend so much on head scans?”

But he says this is exactly what politicians want.

“Politicians want to get health off their backs. They don’t want to be responsible for it,” he said.



**CAMPAIGNER:**  
Dr Peter Hobday

"Andrew Lansley and Jeremy Hunt got rid of their duty to provide health-care to the nation in the Health and Social Care Act in 2012 [which abolished primary care trusts, removed the health secretary's responsibility for the health of the nation, and gave GPs more influence through the creation of clinical commissioning groups (CCGs)].

"In 2010, when a poll showed satisfaction with the NHS was at its peak and waiting lists were pretty low, Andrew Lansley was accused of trying to suppress the poll – he didn't want the public to think the NHS was great, as then he didn't have an excuse to reform it.

"With all the main political parties promoting a market in health care, the electorate, who believe in Nye Bevan's founding principles, are disenfranchised. The National Health Action Party is fighting for those principles."

The party was founded at the end of 2012 by doctors Clive Peedell and Richard Taylor in response to the Health and Social Care Act.

Its manifesto details a 13-point action plan for restoring the NHS, including the cessation of hospital and A&E closures, the reversal of budget cuts and the abolition of prescription charges. Quite how those costs would be met by the public purse in these austere times remains to be seen.

But it is not a single issue party and also pledges to oppose austerity and crack down on tax avoidance.

The party contested the European elections in May in London, where its candidates included comedian Rufus Hound, polling 23,253 votes.

It is now fielding 12 candidates



**BATTLEGROUND:** Dr Hobday will be standing against Maidstone and Weald Tory MP Helen Grant, pictured right



across the country in May's General Election, including GPs, a cancer specialist, a nurse, and prominent NHS hospital campaigners.

Mr Peedell is standing against David Cameron, while other candidates are challenging health secretary Jeremy Hunt, secretary of state for work

and pensions Iain Duncan Smith and deputy prime minister Nick Clegg.

Sidcup GP Dr Bob Gill is running against immigration minister James Brokenshire in Old Bexley and Sidcup.

**D**r Hobday is aware that NHAP is not going to form the next government – but says that what he wants to do above all is raise people's awareness of what is happening to the NHS.

"It hasn't been put in front of the public in a truthful way. The major broadcasters have not allowed proper debate on the privatisation of the NHS.

"We'll feel we have achieved something if we just get people talking about how they want their healthcare provided in future."

There are some who do think the UK can no longer afford the NHS – despite it being assessed as the world's best and most efficient healthcare system in June by a US research institute.

"Most of the money the NHS spends on a person is spent in the last six months of their life, no matter what age they are when they die," Dr Hobday explained.

"Generally speaking the nation is healthier than it has been for a long time, except for the increase in diabetes. When the NHS started, people retired on average about two years before they died. We are living healthier lives for longer, but still not costing the NHS a lot of money.

"And problems like diabetes and weight aren't a failure of the NHS, they're a failure of governments, who have failed to take on the food industry and the drinks industry.

"Our public health policy is influenced by a mixture of big multinational companies vying for business.

"In any case, are we really saying that the sixth richest nation in the world can't afford to look after the health of its people?"

A move to an insurance-based system like the USA's would be a disaster, Dr Hobday said.

"The US system has been described as 'islands of excellence in a sea of misery'," he added.

"The prices are astronomical: \$800 for an ECG, when it only costs them \$10. Even if we only get half their system it would be a disaster.

"If people here want an insurance-based system they will get it, but they will be in for a massive shock when children get ill and they suddenly realise they have to start thinking about money and their insurance policy.

"The decisions made about you would be heavily influenced by money, not by what you clinically need.

"Do you really trust that surgeon if you are told that you don't need an operation or indeed if you are told that you do. Is the surgeon pushing you into something that is going to make money for him?"

"If you think there isn't a problem you are sticking your head in the sand," he added.

"Dentistry is a generation ahead. Most of it is privatised. And how many people can say, hand on heart, I trust my dentist to do what is needed, he's not thinking at all about money when he orders that X-ray or does that crown?"

"Yes, a few rich people will afford the best and get the excellent care, but it won't be spread across the nation. We will end up with a rich service and a poor service and that is not the British way."

■ **What do you think? Share your views and join the debate. Write to: The Editor, KoS, Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford TN23 1PP. Or email [editorial@kosmedia.co.uk](mailto:editorial@kosmedia.co.uk).**

**“ If you have a headache and your GP says you don't need a scan are they saying it because they've been told not spend so much on them? ”**

**Dr Peter Hobday**, on how finances could influence care



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MIKE Eddy, Labour spokesman on Kent County Council's health overview and scrutiny committee, said he sympathised with the NHAP's aims.

"I have a good deal of sympathy with any party trying to protect the NHS and keep it in the public sector," he said.

"They are pretty much right in terms of their view of current government policy, which ultimately, if the current legislation stays in place, will mean large chunks of the NHS can be privatised.

"It allows clinical commissioning groups to offer contracts to anyone provided they are qualified to do the job; so companies will come in with very cheap offers, knowing that they can't do the job, but it means the state service has to fold.

"Then once they have their foot in the door, next time the contract comes up for renewal you will pay over the odds.

"The Government is already thinking of charging people to visit their GP, and all sorts of other things which are not part of the NHS ethos."

But he said people should still vote for Labour, who could be relied on to support the NHS.

"We set the NHS up and without it life in this country would be a lot worse," Cllr Eddy added.

"Yes, Labour brought in private contractors to extend the ability of the NHS to deal with backlogs, but that is very different from the wholesale privatisation which the Tories want to do.

"GPs have always been private



**'ANYONE WOULD BE CRAZY TO SUPPORT THE NHAP'**

contractors, as have a lot of consultants as well.

"We want to return the NHS ethos and extend it. We would repeal the Health and Social Care Act, which lays down the ability to privatise large chunks of the NHS.

"We have to get back to a situation where we are getting

realistic sums of money into the NHS. We are going back to square one with the current shower."

Voting for the NHAP could leave the Tories with carte blanche to trash the NHS, according to the Lib Dem candidate for Maidstone and the Weald in next year's election.

"If you care about the NHS it

would be crazy to support this party," Jasper Gerard told Kent on Sunday.

"All that's going to do is take votes away from the parties that really do care about the NHS, and you will have a purely Tory government that will be cutting the NHS like never before.

"A single issue party that's purely concerned with the NHS can always say they will chuck a billion pounds at the NHS, but perhaps they wouldn't be so concerned about other things that need government resources?"

The Coalition government had taken important steps to improve NHS care, Mr Gerard said.

"We have created 6,000 more doctors; given cancer drugs to 30,000 people who couldn't previously get them on the NHS; put the first ever cap on the cost of social care; and put £400 million into early support for sufferers of mental health problems," he said.

"These are specifically things that the Lib Dems have pushed for. They wouldn't have happened with a purely Tory government."

Thanet North Conservative MP Roger Gale had trouble even acknowledging the NHAP as a political party, referring to them initially as a pressure group.

"What representatives have they got elected to anything?" he added.

He insisted the NHS was not being privatised.

"Certain parts of the work are being done by the private sector, but that has always been the case since the health service came into existence.

"Certain things are most cost effectively done by the private sector," Sir Roger said.

"The NHS is, and under this government will remain, free at the point of delivery.

"If the NHS was being privatised I would be worried. But it isn't."



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# Python Palin confirmed as voice of



**CREATIVES:** Daniel Postgate and Peter Firmin are providing guidance and storylines for the upcoming series

Created in a barn in the Kent countryside, the children's TV favourites are gearing up for their return, writes **Chris Murphy**

**M**ONTY Python star Michael Palin "instantly agreed" to be the narrator of a brand new series of children's TV classic the Clangers, it has been revealed.

The star was revealed this week to be the new voice for the show which returns to our screens next year.

The Clangers was originally the brainchild of the hugely successful production team of Peter Firmin and Oliver Postgate.

Creators of a host of memorable characters – such as Bagpuss, Ivor the Engine and Noggin the Nog – the pair made many of their shows in studios at Blean, near Canterbury.

The Clangers was one of their best-loved, with only two series ever made – broadcast originally between 1969 and 1972 – but constantly repeated.

However, the show is set for a revival with 52 episodes being written and filmed in two batches – plus deals to broadcast them worldwide.

After Mr Postgate passed away in 2008, aged 83, in Broadstairs, his son, Daniel, who lives in Whitstable, teamed up with Mr Firmin, who still lives in Blean, to help guide the next

generation of the series which features odd characters who live in space.

Oliver Postgate was the original narrator, with his instantly recognisable soothing tones

Now he will be replaced by Mr Palin, fresh from a string of Python reunion shows, and as famous for his globetrotting TV shows and books.

Daniel Postgate told us this week: "I could not be happier Michael Palin agreed to do this for us. He was my first and favourite choice and he immediately agreed to do it."

"The producer of the Clangers

**“ I have always liked him. He's the best person for the job. When they suggested someone famous, his was the first name that came up ”**

**Peter Firmin,**  
Creator of the Clangers

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# the re-born Clangers



**SKELETON:** A naked, and clothed, original Clanger. Pictures: ADY KERRY

phoned up someone who did some music for Monty Python and asked them to ask Michael Palin if he was interested in doing the narration. He said he'd loved to do it. He said yes straight away.

"He has not done it yet – he is on a one-man tour at the moment publicising his new diaries. Afterwards, he will be in the studio.

"It will be a slightly organic process – I have written scripts outlining what he is going to say, which he can either stick to but there is a certain amount of leeway for him to add to it. He is a writer and performer himself, so he will be bringing his own char-

acter and personality to the show.

"It will be a fascinating process for me."

**B**oth Mr Postgate and Mr Firmin have been heavily involved in the new series – although Mr Firmin will no longer be creating the famous characters, nor will he be filming in the famous stop-animation method used for the original series.

He has, however, offered guidance and direction on the new-look creations, to ensure they still have that familiar look and feel.

Mr Firmin added: "Michael Palin

was also my first choice. He is the best person for the job – I have always liked him and his character on television and when they suggested we might have someone famous, his was the first name that came up.

"It was always him that I wanted and they finally got him, and he was very pleased to do it."

Adds Mr Postgate: "The production is going well and is ahead of schedule. Stories are still being written and then filmed. There are no glitches or problems, so we will be trying to move on to post production on some of the episodes soon.

"We have written the first 26 for the first batch and they will go out in the spring. In the meantime, we will be working on the next 26.

"We don't make one episode and then move on to the next. It's a bit like Hollywood movies – we do all the filming needed with a particular set of scenery and then do the next lot. It is done in a piecemeal fashion and then put together later.

"It is my job to get good stories out in just 11 minutes to give it some sort of substance. Some programmes can be a bit flimsy in the story. That is my sort of wish, to get good stories and be sympathetic to the original series."

The new series is being co-produced by CBeebies, Coolabi Group, Smallfilms and Sprout.

Mr Palin said: "The world of the Clangers is delightful and irresistible. It's a pleasure and a great privilege to be a part of its return to television."



**THE VOICE:** After the Monty Python reunion, Michael Palin has a new role

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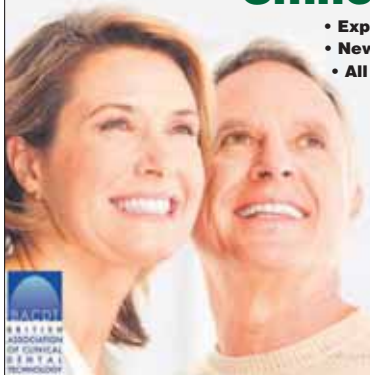
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**O**UTDOOR learning is nothing new. In the past, youngsters benefited from the physical exercise, the fresh air and the sense of freedom gained from such simple activities as climbing trees, pond-dipping and building a den.

But some educators are concerned the bond between children and the great outdoors has been eroded over the past few decades.

In a busier world where families spend less time together and where television, computers and games consoles encourage youngsters to remain sat in their rooms all day, they are getting nothing like the amount of outdoor play previous generations enjoyed.

Taking inspiration from the outdoor educational techniques used in Scandinavia and Germany, the UK's first forest school opened in Somerset in 1993 and since then the movement has gone from strength to strength. But it's only in recent years that it has reached Kent, one of the last counties to get in on the act.

The forest school principle is, put simply, a way of building confidence in young children, without the constraints of a classroom. With a particular emphasis on child-led learning, the approach teaches youngsters life skills and valuable lessons about communication. The fact that it's in the woods just makes it more exciting for them.

The Forest School Association defines it as: “An inspirational process that offers all learners regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment with trees.”

Debbie Fryer is the chief executive of the Temple Hill Trust which runs Dartford Forest School, based on the Temple Hill estate. Aimed at primary school children, it partners three local schools to take classes over 10 weeks.

She said: “As a community organisation which had just come into ownership of four acres of woods and meadow land in the heart of Dartford, we were itching to do something more with the green space.

“The results went far beyond our expectations and confirmed, to the children, ourselves and the schools we work with, what forest school had promised all along – that outdoor learning inspired the children way more than their classrooms ever could.”

Opened in 2009, this is one of the more established examples of forest schools in Kent. Since its creation it has branched out into also providing a summer scheme for young carers, as well as one-off school trips and even taster days for

adults who want to know more about the forest school concept.

“Children have positively flourished under the nurture of our forest school programmes,” said Ms Fryer. “Children who wouldn't or couldn't talk at school were inclined to do so throughout our programmes and beyond. School attendance levels rose dramatically alongside self-confidence and well-being.

“More than this though is the amazement of the teachers who join us at their pupils' dramatic change in appropriate behaviour, social confidence and thoughtfulness for others.”

Most forest schools offer children from partner primary schools a few hours a week out in the woods but one nursery in Margate has its own on-site forest school for pre-school children with several outdoor teachers, known as practitioners, among their staff.

Stuart Welby, one of the practitioners at Manor House Nursery, explained what the idea of forest school means to him.

“It's all about the experiences that children used to get but they don't get these days. Twenty years ago kids would have been out exploring and playing.”

Mr Welby said one of the reasons children stay indoors more is the weather. A nation famously obsessed by our weather, we are instilling in our children a fear of going out in anything but perfect, sunny weather. Forest schools take children outside come rain, snow or shine.

“I find it really interesting when we take children out in what you would call bad weather because they really get a lot out of it,” said Mr Welby. “Like children experimenting with water when it's raining hard. They're dealing with an environment that normally they wouldn't get to see. And I used to be the same – I never used to take my children out in the pouring rain

“It's all about the experiences that children used to get but they don't get these days. Twenty years ago kids would have been out exploring and playing”

**Stuart Welby,**  
Practitioner at Manor House Nursery

[kent-life.co.uk](http://kent-life.co.uk) [kentnews.co.uk](http://kentnews.co.uk)



enjoying the benefits of 'being outside' at one of the county's forest schools, as **Caroline Read** reports



**“ I think forest school makes children a lot more confident. And that's physically as well as socially. It improves communication and establishes an appreciation of the environment ”**

**Caroline Watts,**  
Ide Hill Forest School Kindergarten

“We as adults spend a lot of time looking at our BlackBerry or whatever, so we have to take the lead in showing children that there are other things to do. It's up to parents to say 'let's put that down now and get outside'.

“Nature and the outdoors is exciting and it encourages them to be active too, which will set them up for a more active and healthy life in the future. Some children just aren't given those opportunities.”

**P**arent Hillary Uffindell-Phillips, from Sevenoaks, has been taking her three-year-old to Ide Hill Forest School Kindergarten since January.

She said: “Forest schools were something I'd heard about through Norwegian friends so when we saw there was one starting close to us we jumped at the chance to enrol our daughter Amelie.

“It's all too easy for children to get wrapped up in new technology and the entertainment available and very quickly become entrenched in a sedentary lifestyle.

“If given the choice Amelie would have preferred to sit in front of the television like most children, I think. But we felt it important that she should be given the opportunity and encouraged to get out, run around and get muddy.

“At the end of each session there's a long list of things she's done; fairy hunts, constructing dens and making mud hedgehogs – and her favourite is badge-making.

“Even through the cold and wet winter weather, with waterproof trousers and a few pairs of gloves Amelie keeps warm and doesn't seem at all phased by the weather. She appears to be gaining a love of nature and the outdoors and is excited about spring and seeing some baby animals.

“I'd also say that Amelie is definitely more active than before starting forest school, she's better at climbing and has a bit more courage in attempting new activities.”

With all these new forest schools springing up, someone was needed to train the practitioners. Seeing a gap in the market, Clair Hobson and Scott Woollgrove, of EarthCraftuk near Canterbury, developed a forest school and forest school training provision. Keen to see the county catch up with the many other areas of the UK where forest schools have been benefiting children for several years, the couple soon began offering qualifications so others could set up their own centres.

“To date, EarthCraftuk have trained, or are currently training 72 adults for Level 3 Forest School Practitioner with the numbers on each training programme growing all the time as word spreads about the amazing emotional, psychological and physical benefits forest school brings to everyone involved,” said Ms Hobson, who is also the company secretary of the Forest School Association.

“Considering there were only a handful of qualified Level 3 Forest School Practitioners in the county five years ago, it is wonderful to see the number growing with more and more participants benefiting as a result, with the ripple effect reaching far and wide. Forest school is now firmly rooted in Kent and Medway and is growing all the time.”



**OUT AND ABOUT:** : Youngsters at Ide Hill Forest School Kindergarten enjoy playing, exploring and learning outdoors in the Kent countryside

but now I see what they can gain from it. They dress appropriately and out we go, no matter what.”

**M**r Welby's route into forest schools was an unusual one. Rather than being a teacher who converted, as many practitioners seem to be, he had spent 25 years as a retail manager for Sainsbury's.

“I decided I wanted to do something a bit more valuable with my time,” he explains. “I was working long hours and I was travelling all over Kent, so I decided to do something different. A friend of mine had just set up the nursery I now work for and she suggested I look into forest schools.

“She wanted a forest school person based at the nursery because it's based in a public park and it's got very much an outdoor ethos. They wanted to extend that, so I got trained and we set it up.”

Mr Welby is now qualified to such an extent that he himself is a trainer of forest school practitioners and there are now a total of six staff who take the children out into the woods daily.

“We've had really good comments from parents and from the schools our children have gone on to attend. They've said 'Your children are different; they're more independent, more sociable, more confident – how have you done

that?’ and the answer is it's forest school.

“We're preparing children not only for school but for life. It's all about life skills.”

In January, forest school practitioner Caroline Watts, from Sevenoaks, set up a groundbreaking kindergarten for children aged between two and four in the woods at Ide Hill. Unlike other forest school nurseries, this is something the county has never seen before – it is based completely outdoors.

“One in ten nurseries is an outdoor nursery in Norway, where it can be minus 15C in the winter,” said Miss Watts.

“So I thought if they can do it there then there's no excuse for not being able to do it in this country. Although we've got our challenges, like the rain.”

Ide Hill Forest School Kindergarten is one of the only all-outdoors forest schools in the UK to be Ofsted registered. Its first inspection earlier this year saw it secure an 'outstanding' rating.

Based in woodland rented from the National Trust, Miss Watts can take up to 15 children. Many of them are aged three and four but she even has some two-year-olds in the group. The only shelter for them is a bell tent she uses as a base for paperwork and storage.

“Some of the children only come one day a week but I'd like them to come every day eventually. I think it's just a matter of the parents coming round to the idea,” said Miss Watts.

And they are coming round to the idea. Many of the children who attend her nursery have had it recommended by friends and she is receiving nothing but glowing feedback from the children and their families.

A typical day begins with sitting round a log circle, singing songs. Then they can go on to play games in the woods, hunt for insects, paint with mud – whatever their imaginations will allow. It's not the cleanest way to spend the day but Miss Watts is certain it's teaching them valuable lessons and giving them important life experiences.

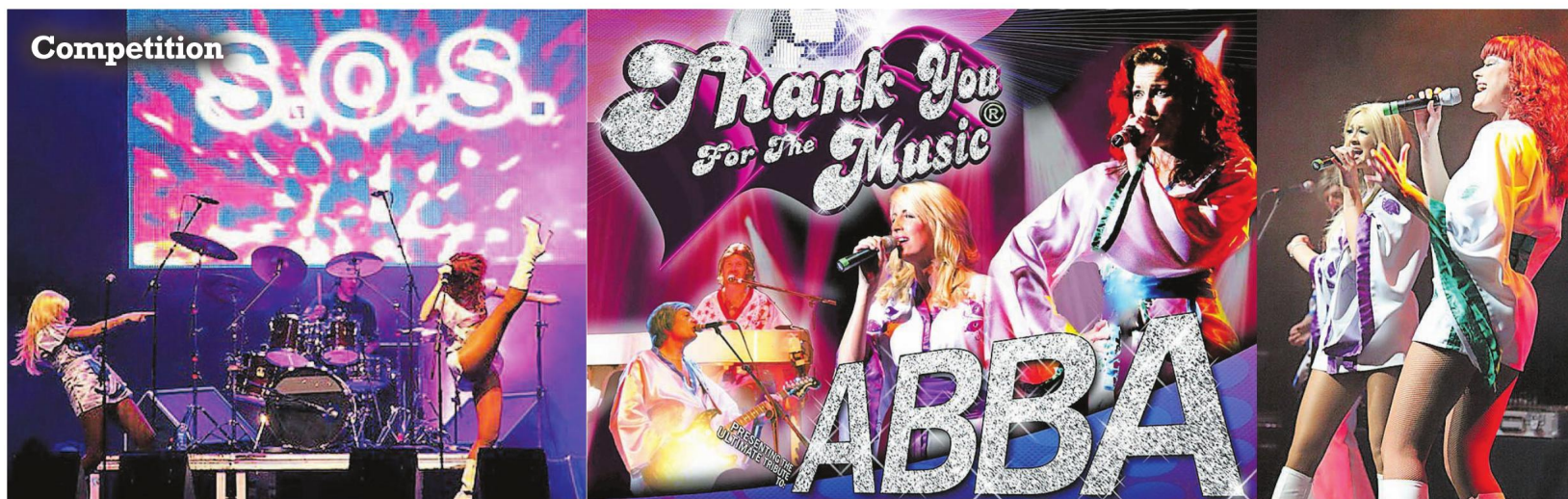
“I think forest school makes children a lot more confident. And that's physically as well as socially. It improves their communication and it establishes an appreciation of the environment.

“Getting outside gives children a sense of freedom and well-being. A recent UN report showed that children in England are among the least happy. If that's the case then we're failing somewhere, aren't we?”

There are many reasons behind the cultural changes that have led to our nation's children spending less time outdoors.

One that comes up time and time again while speaking to practitioners is people's addiction in recent years to screens: iPads, iPhones, games systems, laptops – children have never before had such access to entertainment beamed directly into their laps.





## Win tickets to ABBA musical Thank You for the Music

CELEBRATING the 40th anniversary of ABBA's Eurovision triumph, hit stage show Thank You for the Music is coming to town.

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The cast take live music fans back to 1974, to the night when Bjorn, Benny, Agnetha and Frida arrived as

pop music superstars by winning the Eurovision Song Contest with their self-composed song Waterloo.

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Trouper, Mamma Mia, Thank You for the Music, Take A Chance on Me, The Winner Takes It All, Chiquitita, I Have A Dream, Gimme, Gimme, Gimme and, of course, Waterloo.

To be in with a chance of winning, simply answer the following question:

■ The original Abba supergroup consisted of Agnetha, Frida, Benny and...

- a) Bob
- b) Bjorn
- c) Barry

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MUSIC and your answer then your first name, surname address and postcode to 80058, e.g. KOS MUSIC C JOHN SMITH 2 THE STREET, TOWN, DV2 2GT.

Texts cost 50p plus your standard network rate.

Winners will be selected from all correct entries. The promoter's decision is final. Usual terms and conditions apply – details of which can be found on our website [www.kentnews.co.uk](http://www.kentnews.co.uk). Please note if you should enter after the closing deadline of Wednesday, September 23, 2014, your entry will not be

valid, but you still may be charged. SMS services are provided by BBA Digital. Helpline telephone: 0844 3572403.

Alternatively, enter by post to ABBA Assembly Hall Competition, Archant KOS Media, Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PP including your answer, name, address, postcode and contact telephone number.

And don't worry if you don't win. Tickets for the show can be bought, priced £21.50 each, from the Assembly Hall box office on 01892 530613.

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**H**ES the adventurer who has scaled some of the world's most terrifying peaks, from the Eiger to Everest...but did you know it all started close to Tunbridge Wells?

Sir Chris Bonington, Britain's most famous explorer and mountaineer, was 16 years old when he made his first climb on Harrison's Rocks in 1951.

Part of the famous rock formations known as the Tunbridge Wells Sand Formation, which includes the soft sandstone landmarks in the spa town itself – most notably Wellington Rocks – Harrison's Rocks, just over the border in East Sussex, have been a starting point for many a climber.

And now Sir Chris, 80, is returning to where it all started as he calls in at Tunbridge Wells' Assembly Hall Theatre as part of a UK tour.

Speaking to KoS this week, Sir Chris explained how it all began.

"I had been walking in the Snowden area with a mate of mine," he recalls. "We had no equipment, wandering in the snow, and yet I thought it was the best thing that had ever happened to me."

"I decided to get in touch with a family friend who was an experienced climber, and persuaded him to take me on my first climb, which was really just a little out crop of rocks, near Tunbridge Wells, but from the moment I first tied a rope around my waist, I knew I'd found something amazing."

"It's that element of adventure – enjoying what is essentially a risk game – you could get killed, and that is a strong part of it. Linked to that is the joy of the climb itself, there is a terrific satisfaction of having control over the body, and being able to make it do something physically demanding very well."

"There is also the camaraderie, I have led expeditions and done solo expeditions, but my favourite ones have always been the ones where there's been a very small team."

"And finally, it is very beautiful terrain, the grandeur of your surroundings is breathtaking."

While Sir Chris, who has undertaken 19 Himalayan expeditions, including four to Everest, instantly loved climbing, it was not something he believed he could do professionally, and so continued it as a hobby while working towards a traditional career.

He joined the Army after doing National Service, leaving in 1961 to join an expedition to the third peak of Everest – Nuptse.

The next year, he met wife Wendy and ended up getting a desk job in a division of Unilever, which he left after nine months to go on another mountaineering expedition.

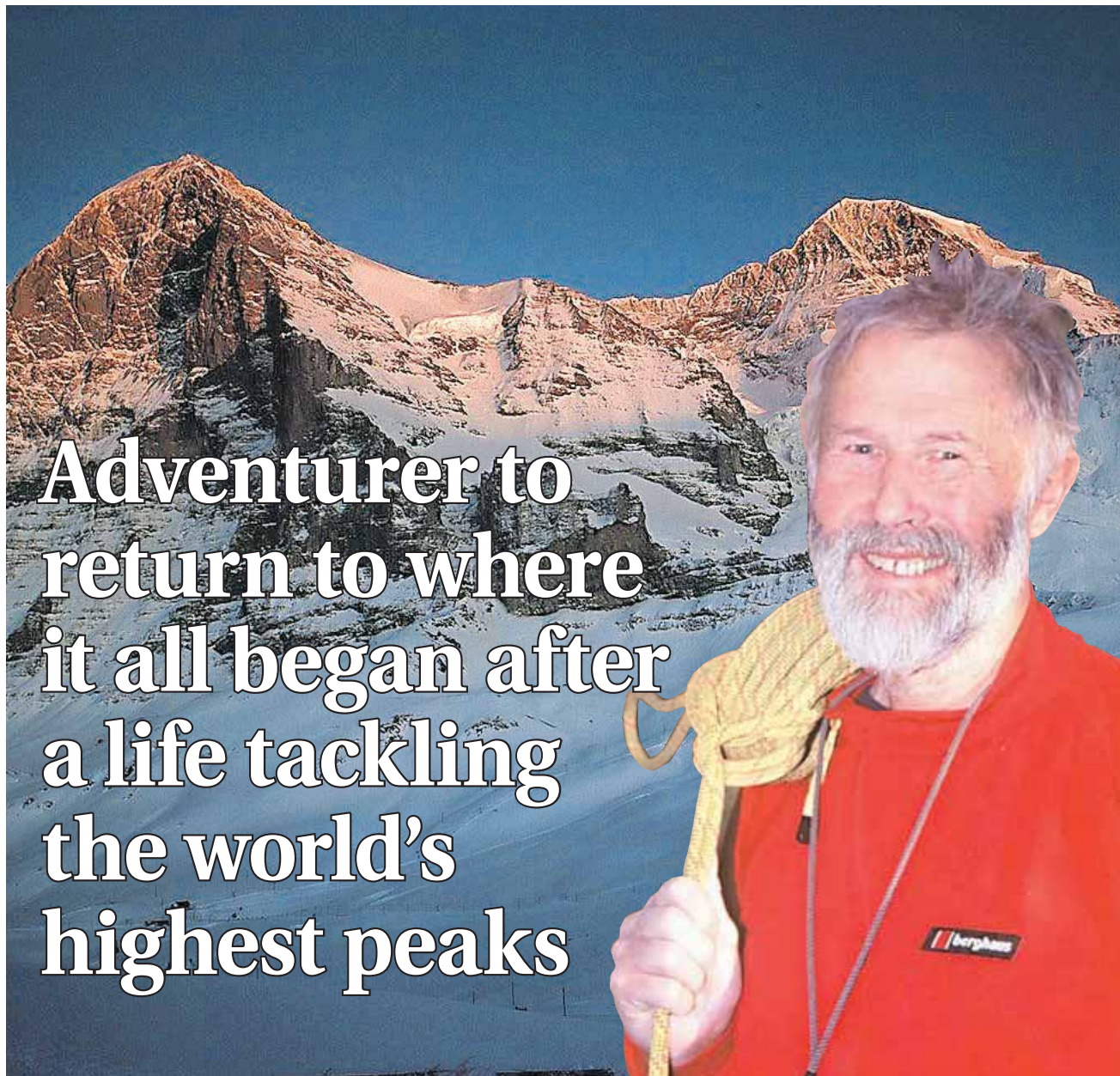
That summer, he was part of the first British ascent of the north wall of the Eiger with Ian Clough. The resulting media interest in the trip gave him a taste of fame – writing and giving talks on the expedition.

**A**nd it was from there he built a career around what he loved doing.

He says: "I feel that I have managed to make a living around climbing – through communication via books and lectures. I think I've become a professional communicator about my hobby."

"I see life as being composed of three things, work, family and pas-

Mountaineering legend Sir Chris Bonington talks to **Maria Chiorando** ahead of his visit to the county in October at a theatre just miles from his first ever climb



times. Being able to combine my work and pastime has been brilliant."

And there appears to be a voracious appetite for his exploits, having written 17 books about them.

He adds: "People are interested in adventure, I think that there are two types of them – the ones who want to be at the forefront of adventurous pursuits such as climbing, caving and sailing, and the other type, of which there are many more, who are inspired by reading about other people's adventures."

"There are a lot of 'armchair adventurers' and I truly believe everyone has that adventurous streak."

Partaking in the real thing is not without its dangers though.

"I recently had a toe removed – I had a big bunion and it was incredibly painful, now, you must keep your big toe – it's very important, luckily it was my second toe that was removed, and I'm not really missing it. When amputated they found it had gout."

It's not his only health problem – following a recent climb up the Old Man of Hoy – a sea stack on Hoy, part of the on the Orkney Isles – to celebrate his 80th birthday, he's suffered a trapped nerve in his back, about which he is typically stoic.

He explains: "I was rather unfit when I did that climb, which is why I'm a bit injured now, I had been a full-time carer for my wife Wendy at the time, and I couldn't get out much."

"I wasn't sure whether to go ahead with the climb after Wendy died earlier this year [following a battle with motor neurone disease], but it had been something that had been planned for a while, and I have a very good constitution and am pretty fit for my age."

"Having said that, it has been a very difficult year, and I can't imagine anything more heartbreaking, so when it came to climbing the Old Man of Hoy, I wasn't sure whether I was emotionally up to it."

"I had lost the love of my life, but I firmly believe that you have to keep going, you have to keep doing things."

"In all forms of bereavement, you can still have genuine moments of real enjoyment. There is, underneath that, the grief of losing a loved one, and that will never go away, but as time moves on it gets easier, and you owe it to yourself and to others to make the most of your own life."

**S**ir Chris, who was knighted in 1996, often receives letters from the public.

"It's lovely when people get in touch, and they will often be asking for advice, saying something like they saw one of my talks, and now they now want to climb Everest, how should they do it?"

"I would always say to just get started. The key thing is to learn how to do it and if you don't know anyone who is a climber, it's easy to find someone online – Google it and any

number of guides will teach you how to climb."

"First of all, you need to learn the basics, and as you do so, you will meet people who you can then go off and do it with."

"You should learn your craft on your doorstep, climbing locally at first, remembering to take it one step at a time."

So what can audiences expect from his Kent talks?

"The major challenge is taking the story of my life, and fitting it into such a short amount of time, I didn't want it to be just a list of climbs, so it's hopefully more interesting than that."

"It will be excellent to come back to the county, back to where it all began."

**■ Sir Chris Bonington will be at the Assembly Hall Theatre in Tunbridge Wells on October 5. For tickets call the box office on 01892 530613 or see the website at [www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk](http://www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk).**



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# 'I didn't realise we'd won £1.4m Lotto jackpot for over a month'

By Maria Chiorando

maria.chiorando@archant.co.uk

**W**HEN Sally Ann Wells read a newspaper article about an unclaimed lottery jackpot, she thought she ought to check her tickets. It was lucky she did because for a month she had sat on a winning ticket worth a staggering £1,471,718.

And this week the 63-year-old, and partner Jerry Gregory, 61, both retired from Ramsgate, went public about their win to pick up the cheque.

Ms Wells said: "I always think of Lotto as my weekly flutter and a little bit of fun; never in my wildest dreams did I think it would lead to this."

"I've never won anything in my life and, if I've wanted something, I've always paid my own way and worked hard to get it. Like most people starting retirement, we knew we had to be careful with our pennies, but we were relatively secure."

"Now, we are incredibly secure and, more importantly, we can help out our family and friends. That's the most amazing part of this whole crazy adventure."

"I'm not sure if a cup of tea is the



**THEIR CUP RUNNETH OVER:** Sally Ann Wells and Jerry Gregory celebrate winning £1,471,718 on the Lotto draw

most appropriate thing to celebrate our newfound millionaire status but it was certainly needed that morning.

"When Jerry finally came downstairs and double-checked the num-

bers we couldn't believe we were the mystery ticketholders.

"It was a shock... but a nice one."

Originally from north London, the couple's children and grandchildren

still live in that area so Sally and Jerry decided to keep the news a secret until they could drive up at the weekend and share the news in person.

They handed their family members

a photocopy of the news article and the winning ticket.

"It took a few minutes for the penny to drop, but when it did, they were very pleased," said Ms Wells.

"They are very happy for us, and also very happy that we are going to help them out too."

The couple also have a few plans of their own.

Ms Wells said: "We were planning to travel anyway – a visit to America travelling from coast to coast. We'll still be going, but now it will be a bit more luxurious."

"We also have charities that we have also supported, and now they will get a little bit more than normal."

The pair are also looking at upgrading to a new Land Rover they can use to continuing exploring the Kent coastline.

Ms Wells and Mr Gregory are the second Kent couple in recent weeks to be rejoicing in their millionaire status, joining Wayne and Desiree Home from Tonbridge who celebrated a £1m Euromillions win last month.

The win does not mean the pair will no longer play the Lotto anymore, however.

Ms Wells said: "I will continue to buy tickets – but I will definitely check them in future!"

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# The battle to defeat the use of sexual violence in war zones

**Sarah Linney** meets a 24-year-old from Hythe who has volunteered to fly to Beirut as part of a team hoping to use technology to ease the suffering...

**A**SK most 24-year-olds what they did at the weekend and they'll tell you they went shopping, went to the cinema and watched a bit of TV.

But not Crista Buznea. The marketing manager from Hythe is volunteering on a Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) project to help victims of conflict, has rubbed shoulders with the Hollywood actress Angelina Jolie, and is flying to Lebanon in the autumn to further her work.

Miss Buznea, who works at travel company Holiday Extras, became involved with the FCO's work after attending the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict in London in June.

Chaired by the then foreign secretary William Hague and actress Ms Jolie, special envoy for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the summit was the largest ever gathering on the subject, with 1,700 delegates from 129 countries.

"I just went out of my own interest," said Miss Buznea, who is originally from Romania and came to England in 2008, to study at Canterbury Christ Church University.

"I kind of follow what the UN does," she explains. "I'm someone who likes to be aware of what's happening in the world."

"I saw William Hague and Angelina Jolie – she said 'Hi' to us. She was lovely. She is very knowledgeable on the situation, very active in this field, and many people don't know about it."

"I am glad the UN have paired up with her as they are reaching a target audience they have never reached before."

Miss Buznea applied to join a hackathon – an event where people with different areas of expertise collaborate on software projects – at the summit, and worked as part of a team looking at how technology could be used to prevent sexual violence in conflict zones.

The team's idea was for a piece of software that would map the different shelters for victims in an area, allowing them to find out where their nearest shelter was through their mobile phones.

Victims would contact a hotline through either a call, a text message or web-based app. Non-governmental organisations and shelter workers would then get back in touch and direct them to their nearest shelter.

"It can be for anyone who needs help, not just victims of sexual violence," she explains.

"They might be refugees who need medical help or shelter, or kids

whose parents have been displaced.

"We decided to apply the project to Syria as we had someone in the team from Syria and it's an area that desperately needs maps of shelters, because people are still fleeing across the borders."

"There is also quite a high level of literacy in the area and people have access to mobile phones – they are very limited devices, but they can call, they can text."

After developing their idea over three days, the team were crowned the winners of the hackathon and with funding from the Swedish and Dutch embassies, were urged to carry on with the project so it could be deployed in Syria and the surrounding area. "Since then we have been doing lots of research," she adds.

"We have been approaching key NGOs (non-government organisations) in the area and trying to find out what their technical requirements are; what we need to build. We are in talks with three different NGOs that could benefit from our services."

Those three organisations are based in Beirut – and because of the difficulties of communicating over such a long distance, the group have decided to head out there for a month in November.

"We'll talk to them, find out what their requirements are and create the software," Miss Buznea said.

"We want to be in the field as we create this. We need to establish a base there, or maybe recruit a team of people in the area, who can carry on the project and manage the technical side from there."

"We will do our best to build what they need. Mapping shelters is quite difficult because they move all the time, so they might just want something to improve communication."

Miss Buznea has brought her marketing expertise to the project, working on presentations, branding, PR and communication.

It requires several hours of her time

**“ Every one of us has the ability to help, to do something, and that’s a really important thing for me.... This was my way of settling that with myself ”**

**Crista Buznea,**  
FCO project volunteer



**VOLUNTEER:** Crista Buznea (above) attended a meeting hosted by Angelina Jolie (top) and decided to get involved

each week – which she manages to find despite not only doing a full-time job but studying for a masters degree in responsible tourism in her spare time.

But what made Miss Buznea want to get involved in the first place?

"I suppose it was the fact that you see and hear so much on TV and on the radio all the time," she said.

"I just wanted to learn about it because I felt like I wasn't knowledgeable enough about what's going on in that part of the world."

"I have travelled to Cambodia and Thailand, and I learned about their history. Since then I have felt the need to learn about other conflict zones."

Although just too young to remember the Ceausescu regime in her home land, as a child in the 1990s she could not fail to be of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, which bordered Romania.

**T**he Army of Republika Srpska (Bosnian Serb Army) used the mass rape of Bosnian Muslim women as a military strategy during the conflict.

Estimates of the number of women raped vary between 12,000 and 50,000.

"Growing up I knew that there was a situation in Yugoslavia," she recalls. "I started looking into what happened in Cambodia too when I came back from there and I began to understand the true horror of war."

"Every one of us has the ability to help, to do something, and that's a really important thing for me. I couldn't offer a lot from a financial point of view, so this was my way of settling that with myself."

"There are so many causes, so many problems at the moment – poverty, sexual violence, the situation in the Middle East – and it is very easy to

overlook them and become oblivious to their importance. We need to not let that happen and try to tackle things, or at least understand them. And after you understand them you will feel the need to address them in one way or another."

She says she isn't nervous about her visit to Beirut – and the group are now looking for a sponsor to cover the cost of their accommodation and flights.

"It's as safe as any destination in that area," she says.

"We will have the support of an NGO, who will look after us – and we won't do stupid things. There is an Arabic speaker in our team too."

"They are such a dedicated team. It is a pleasure to spend time with them as they are so focused, knowledgeable and enthusiastic."

"It has been a wonderful opportunity and has taught me a lot."



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**ROUND THE WORLD:** Charlie Landsborough has thousands of passionate fans across the globe



**S**OME people you just like. You talk to them for a few minutes over the phone and their personality lifts your spirits... the world all of a sudden seems a better place.

Charlie Landsborough is one such and, while a short chat on the other end of a line rarely offers the greatest insight into anyone's life, his manner is surely one of the reasons he has proved so enduringly successful.

Landsborough is one of the most popular country and folk singer-songwriters in England, his nationality coming as a surprise when you first speak to him.

As he accepts himself, many people expect him to be American, or perhaps Irish. Maybe it's the long silver hair topped by a fedora, together with the music that he plays and sings, but the Birkenhead lilt catches you out when you initially speak to him.

Although born in Wrexham during the Second World War (he was one of 11 children), it was not long before the family returned to Birkenhead, where Landsborough still lives.

"Most people move out of Birkenhead when they can," he joked. "But I've moved closer into the town as I've gone on."

The rise to the top of his chosen field was not as smooth as the voice and he talks about the time he was effectively "down and out" and of

## It's good to meet nice folk who can also play a bit

Charlie Landsborough combines music with an easygoing style that still captivates a worldwide audience, writes **David Mairs**



his spell as a postman in Coventry, so he appreciates where he is now.

"It's funny, when I was young I used to walk down a nice road in the town and pass a particular house. I'd look at it and wonder how anyone could afford to live in it. It's now the house I live in – it's no mansion, but it's more than I could have ever expected."

The ready acknowledgement of his background and gentle telling of the tales clearly translate easily to the stage.

As he said: "I think they [the audience] see a very ordinary person who loves what he does. I've

always disliked pomp and arrogance – I'm just one person, the same person here on stage as in normal life."

The country-music awards are too numerous to list here, while his 17 albums have helped sustain a majestic career that could easily slip under the radar of those not familiar with the genre.

His latest album is *Here, There And Everywhere* and in essence a tribute to what his website describes as "the great song-writing talents of Sir Paul

Continued on page 39 »

» Features team

**Editor: David Mairs**  
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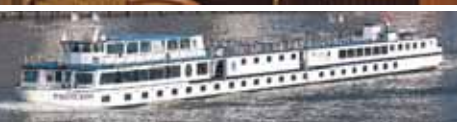


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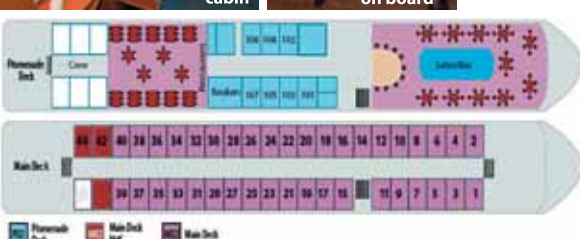
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Festive Bruges



Festive Lille



« Continued from page 37

McCartney, John Lennon and George Harrison". Most of the songs, it almost goes without saying, you will recognise from their delivery by The Beatles.

"It's a bit of a departure for me," he said. "It was the record company's idea. Usually I do all my own stuff and leave others' well alone. But The Beatles are my favourite band of all time, so it's a privilege to record their songs.

"The response has been really good. The Beatles still have a resonance with everyone on Merseyside and there's such a wealth of material."

If Landsborough's tie to Merseyside shines through, the perceived lack of

**“You're round the world, hear a voice call out your name and think you've travelled 12,000 miles to play Belfast”**

respect from others towards the place of their upbringing sparks a predictably strong response.

"Ringo Starr was down in London, I think, and made disparaging remarks about Liverpool, saying that he didn't have fond memories of it or that he didn't miss anything about it.

"It didn't go down well here – you shouldn't forget the people who helped create you."

Landsborough is particularly well regarded in Ireland. Is that its link with Liverpool coming into play?

"It's where the whole thing kicked off for me [with No 1 single What



**MAN OF MELLOW:** Charlie Landsborough takes his laid-back approach to life on the road, his national tour including Tunbridge Wells and Margate dates

Colour Is The Wind]. I'd had rejection for some time but thought no, I'm not giving up, and eventually went to the top of the Irish charts. My life was transformed overnight.

"I think it's to do with Celtic countries in general – it's the same with Scotland. But, yes, with the Irish, you can be transported round the world, hear a voice call out your name and think you've travelled 12,000 miles to play Belfast."

It's fair to say that Landsborough's rendition of those Beatles songs on Here, There And Everywhere differs to how you're accustomed to them. A mellow interpretation is as good a way as any to describe it. Has he always been this mellow?

He laughs and talks about his time playing pub rock'n'roll and blues before saying that he does like "melancholy music" and that friends joke his own sound could cause listeners to nod off or even kill themselves.

Perhaps in deference to any such worries, he does, he says, up the tempo between "the sadder songs" to stop people falling asleep.

His musical influences are wide and varied, something he believes important in his own work.

"I lived in a house where my father sang the old ballads and I grew up through the time of Elvis and other singer-songwriters. I like bluegrass and there's still a little bit of all those

influences there. If you confine yourself to one tiny area of music, I think that you're denying yourself."

As part of a national tour, Landsborough is visiting Tunbridge

**“If you confine yourself to one tiny area of music, I think that you're denying yourself”**

Wells and Margate this autumn.

What will audiences be listening to?

"You can't leave out the songs people know you for, while there are new ones and Beatles songs from the

album. We've got an excellent light and sound system and the band's great as everyone gets on so well. One fella said it was the first band he'd been in where everyone liked everyone else."

This is clearly no Spinal Tap...

Charlie's way too nice for that. Genuinely.

■ Charlie Landsborough plays the Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells, on Thursday, October 30, at 7.30pm. Call 01892 530613 or visit [www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk](http://www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk).

■ On Saturday, November, November 1, he is at Theatre Royal Margate at 7.30pm. Phone 01843 292795 or alternatively visit [theatreroyalmargate.com](http://theatreroyalmargate.com).

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**DRAMATIC PAIR:** Actor Ian McElhinney and playwrite wife Marie Jones

# Reality, romance and finding humour in a tale featuring suicide

Game Of Thrones star Ian McElhinney speaks to **David Mairs** about a fresh version of his wife's play *Stones In His Pockets*

**L**IFE is good if frenetically busy for Ian McElhinney. An acting career spanning three decades has had its inevitable highs and lows, but it is his role in TV fantasy drama *Game Of Thrones* that has catapulted his popularity with the wider viewing audience to new levels.

Now in his mid-60s and not a man to rest on his laurels – he featured last year in both *Ripper Street* and *The Fall* on television – McElhinney is overseeing the rejuvenation of *Stones In His Pockets*, a play written by his wife Marie Jones and directed by his good self.

Seen by more than two million people and with a run on Broadway and four-and-half years in the West

End under its belt, it is the story of a small town in County Kerry in which life is rocked by a Hollywood film crew pitching up to make a movie.

At first people in the town are excited by the crew's presence and further by the opportunity to appear in the film as extras.

Predictably, perhaps, it soon becomes clear that the Hollywood hot-shots are not interested in them and are concerned solely with meeting their production deadlines.

Further, it is evident that they aim to present the town and its people in a wholly romanticised manner. This is Ireland and this is how everyone else perceives you, like it or not.

Matters come to a head when local lad Sean Harkin is humiliated by

Caroline, the beautiful actress who is one of the film's stars. Sean subsequently kills himself, drowning with stones in his pockets...

The central characters are friends Charlie Conlon and Jake Quinn and the play focuses on their response to the events enveloping their town.

To add to the mix, Charlie has written a script that he would like to see translated into a film. Following Sean's death, Charlie and Jake rewrite this and present it to the movie director now in their midst in the hope he will develop it.

Sadly, it is deemed insufficiently romantic or commercial.

This is, of course, one of the play's main thrusts: the contrast between reality and romantic perception.

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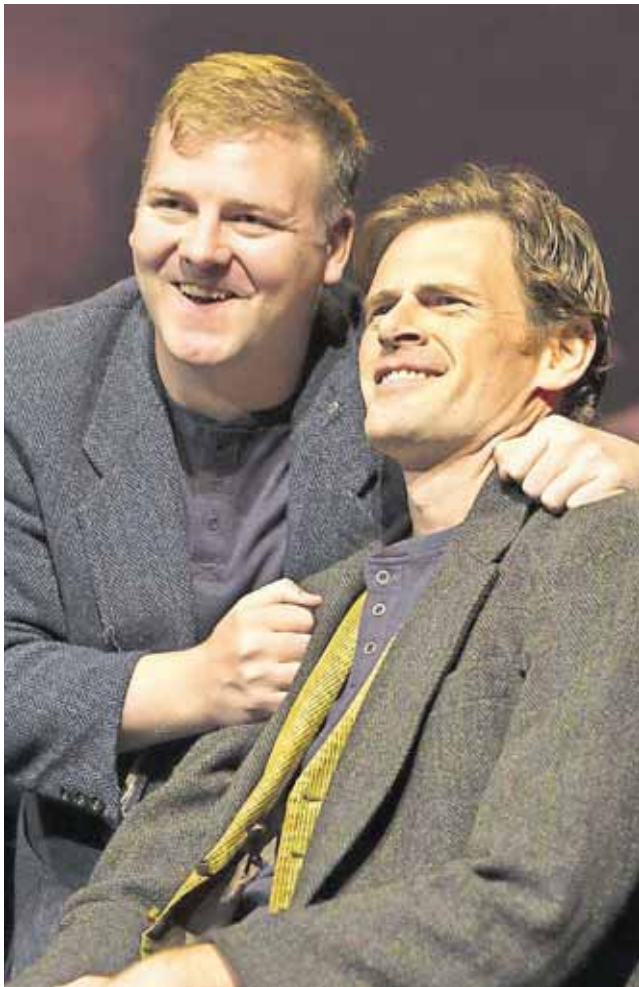
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**TWO-HANDER:** Stephen Jones, left, and Conor Delaney play all the parts

And, while much has been made of the play being set in Ireland and, as ever, the notion of a 'lost Ireland', surely this is a tale with a wider constituency.

"Sure," said Belfast-born McElhinney. "It's very Irish in its tone, but there's a universal theme of a small town being overwhelmed by the cultural juggernaut. There's a broad spectrum covering personal tensions and issues such as self-belief and convictions."

With a young man's suicide being such a central event in the work, it might come as a surprise to see *Stones In His Pockets* described as a

tragicomedy. Can suicide ever really be viewed in a humorous light?

"Yes, it's depressing and sort of prompted the play in the first place.

It's about young people with limited opportunities who are struggling.

"It's not, though, a comedy about this subject. Marie never considered writing a comedy, but her sense of humour and wish to entertain mean the play is genuinely very funny."

Despite the story's universal elements, you can't avoid its Irish backdrop, which will doubtless endear it to



audiences this side of the water.

"I think the English tend to like the Irish, like to be entertained by them," said McElhinney.

Those romantic notions again and, as he accepts, some people are funny and some are not. Nationality has nothing to do with it.

The play features upwards of 15 characters, but all are played by two actors, Conor Delaney and Stephen Jones. Potentially confusing?

"There are clear signatures, vocal signatures particularly, that identify very quickly the role being played. We usually create somebody while on stage – we don't tend to bring them on as new characters.

"Throughout, though, you have these two characters at the heart of it, the interpretation of this world."

McElhinney thinks it's important he watches the show at least two or three times on tour "to see that things are going as you would like them to and to act as a morale-booster to those who are in it".

He "sort of" knows Kent and has friends in Bromley. He could, he says, "well be there" when the show comes to the town's Churchill theatre. So do say hello if you see him... you know how friendly the Irish are.

■ *Stones In His Pockets* is at the Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells, on Thursday, October 2, at 7.30pm. Call 01892 530613 or visit [www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk](http://www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk).

■ On Monday, October 20, at 7.30pm, it is at The Churchill Theatre in Bromley. Phone 0844 871 7620 or visit [www.atgtickets.com](http://www.atgtickets.com).

■ The Orchard Theatre, Dartford, hosts the show on Wednesday, October 29. Phone 01322 220000 or visit [orchard.co.uk](http://orchard.co.uk).



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KENT LIFE

## MasterChef winner Dhruv's mission to spice up your cooking



**ALL THINGS NICE:** MasterChef winner Dhruv Baker wants people to know that spices are incredibly versatile and indeed ingredients in their right

**P**ACKING up the contents of his kitchen for a recent house move, former MasterChef winner Dhruv Baker found that his spice collection needed a cull.

"It was ridiculous. Like any person's spice cupboard, there were about four jars of cumin, because you go to the supermarket and think 'Do I have any cumin? I'll just buy some more'. And probably five jars of coriander for the same reason," the chef confesses.

Like the rest of us, Baker was also guilty of harbouring "ancient spices" at the back of his shelves.

"It's usually mums who are the worst – I've seen stuff from the Eighties," he adds. "They don't taste of anything. You may as well add dust to your cooking."

Spices matter a lot to Baker, who was born in Mexico and has also lived in India, Spain and Tanzania.

The 38-year-old TV cookery show champion has been described as having the 'palate of an angel'. Here he tells **Jeananne Craig** about his book *Spice: Layers Of Flavour*.

He was described as having 'the palate of an angel' when he picked up the MasterChef trophy in 2010 and has now published a book called *Spice: Layers Of Flavour*.

"The word spicy seems to have morphed into meaning something hot. It's doing food an injustice – to me, it means so much more," says the chef, who lives in Surrey with Glaswegian wife Aileen and their two sons, aged six and three.

Among the spices Baker recommends we all have in our kitchen are star anise, whole coriander, fennel seed, chilli powder and turmeric.

"Hopefully the book will go some way to showing that spices are

much more versatile, and to look on them as ingredients in their own right," he adds.

The 38-year-old was "bored to death" working in media sales before he entered MasterChef, which gave him "the most amazing opportunity, for which I'm eternally grateful".

Since winning, he's made TV appearances, set up a catering company and is working on taking over a pub in south-west London, doing "good, honest food that people want to eat".

"For the next six months, I fully expect to be in the kitchen seven days a week and running both the catering side of things

and the pub," he says.

It was MasterChef judge Gregg Wallace who Baker has to thank for his 'palate of an angel' moniker.

"Good old Gregg," he says with a smile. "That was completely overwhelming and very flattering – I should probably have had it put on a business card."

Baker has also become good friends with MasterChef's John Torode, and the pair occasionally cook for each other.

Does he still feel the pressure to impress the Australian judge?

"Every time he comes round and I'm cooking, I get nervous. I shouldn't, but I do. I guess it's a good thing – it shows you care."



# Sometimes a revolution needs a bit of stardust to be convincing

## Wyatt & Jones

**Location:** Broadstairs

**By David Mairs**

**T**HE Kentish food revolution has surely been nowhere stronger than in Thanet. A place that has been slated for so long by so many as beyond hope has, to some tangible degree in some areas, begun to turn that interminable, proverbial corner.

Many of the professed drivers of this apparent change in outlook have in truth been nothing of the sort.

Too much has been done in the buzz name of regeneration, too much has contributed little, if anything, to the rebirth of this once-glorious isle. Too much has been PR bluff from

people whom you would like to think knew better.

One field that we would surely all like to see prosper, however, is that of food. We all like a good meal and we all like a greater choice of restaurants in which to have one, hence the veritable boom in dineries has been welcomed by one and all.

One of the venues to form part of this new wave of eating opportunity is Wyatt & Jones, "an independent, family-run, British restaurant situated under the historic York Gate, with views of Viking Bay, Broadstairs", to coin its own

website description.

It is indeed ideally placed. The setting and views are attractive and it is perfectly positioned to attract a discerning clientele.

We arrived on a Saturday evening when the restaurant had several other diners already in place without being anywhere near full.

There was an unpleasant draught over our table and we asked if we could move to another, but this was apparently not possible as all the other tables would soon be filled, we were told.

No matter, we set about our starters of Devon crab tart, radish salad and soured cream (me) and British asparagus, lemon, almond and Old Winchester cheese (her).

In truth, none of the five starters available had really grabbed me and, perhaps unsurprisingly, I was not bowled over by the crab tart, which

lacked flavour.

The asparagus dish over on the other side of the table was, however, eaten without complaint.

My main of lamb saddle, wild-garlic stuffing, black-pudding hash and baby carrots was competently cooked although I didn't find that the black pudding complemented the lamb well.

My companion ate plaice fillet, spelt barley, broad beans, spinach and spring onion, which she enjoyed.

With extra garlic potato and cabbage, along with desserts of soufflé and 'adult' ice cream, a bottle of Campo Flores and a couple of coffees, the bill came to a round £86.

Once we'd paid a regulation tip of 10 per cent, the thick end of £100 had departed our bank account. And for that, you expect something special, especially at this eastern tip of Kent.

So was it special? Well, no, not really. I was a touch underwhelmed, to be honest.

I've been fortunate enough to review many restaurants in the county, but I take nothing for granted. A fine meal will still have me singing a venue's praises for days, even weeks, to come.

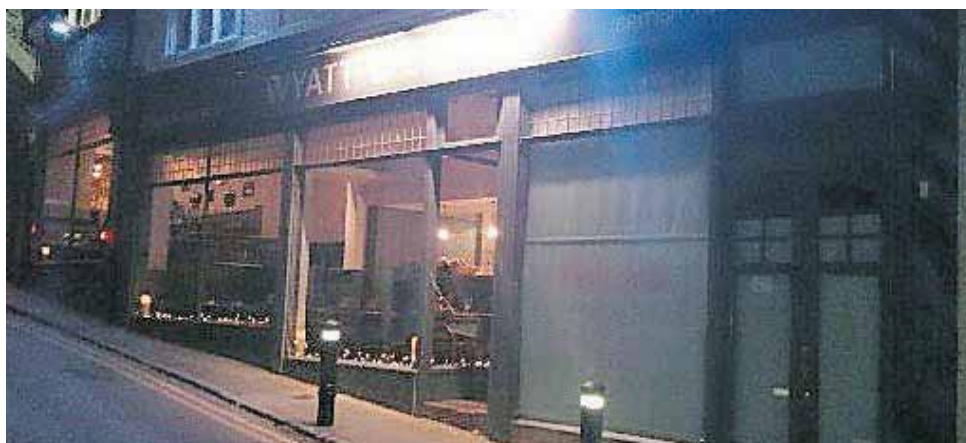
There was nothing fundamentally wrong with our meal at Wyatt & Jones – it just lacked that sparkle to lift it much beyond the ordinary.

Perhaps it's a function of that revolution with which we began this tale, but we expect more for our hard-earned these days.

And so we should.

**Wyatt & Jones**  
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## Thames Estuary is 'one lovely place'

I AM very happy that Boris Johnson didn't get his way with the Thames Estuary airport.

I hope this is the very last ever we in north Kent hear of this environmental vandalism.

This was always in my book a non-starter, pie in the sky, idea.

Our wildlife needs our protection. The Thames Estuary is one lovely place, not a wasteland like Boris seems to think.

**Robert Standing**, via email

## Welfare cuts would stop the migrants

THE reoccurring build up of migrants in Calais again underlines how generous and attractive our welfare state is, especially when those seeking to come to Britain have passed through so many other countries whose welfare is obviously not up to their expectations.

The Mayor of Calais is faced with an enormous dilemma, not to mention expense, of how to solve the problem. She has threatened to close the Port of Calais, although this might bring publicity it does not guarantee to disperse migrant camps.

She has also demanded Europe contribute to the enormous expense that is bankrupting the Calais region. Her final plea is for Britain to modify its enormous welfare state and thus deal with the basic expectations of migrants which is their main motivation.

Kent and south east England have the same problems of managing our ports and dealing with all the issues to stop successful attempts by migrants to arrive in Britain.

All this costs a fortune and now there is a real possibility of having to contribute to the migrant welfare camps in Calais.

We really should not be spending more.

The Conservatives guaranteed to reform the welfare state which should have made it less attractive to immigrants and to those that choose an idle life.

Kent can't afford closure of its "M1 to Europe" so welfare benefits must be further limited, to say three months and reduced to the European norm.

Kent council and town budgets cannot be expected to cover more migrant expense while it is still fully stretched looking after our own idle who choose to sit on benefits.

**Edward La Coste**, Lamberhurst

## LETTER OF THE WEEK



## Surely we should be backing Dame Kelly?

I FOUND Councillor Chris Smith's remarks about Dame Kelly Holmes' cafe in Hildenborough (KoS, 31.08) inappropriate, intemperate and patronising.

Surely we should be encouraging anyone who is trying to get a business off the ground in what is, hopefully, a period of economic recovery.

Perhaps it has escaped Cllr Smith's attention that the cafe will provide local employment opportunities and possibly

provide also a boost to the village's economy.

Cllr Smith says he feels "sorry" for Dame Kelly. Well, she has attained the highest honours in athletics, been recognised by the Queen and served Queen and country for a decade in the Army.

Now she is trying to do something positive for her home town, perhaps we should, in fact, be proud of her and wish her well in this new, imaginative project?

**Dr Mark Steele**, Hadlow

## Dreamland is sure to be big visitor hit

HAVING read your article on Dreamland (KoS 31.08) we think it's great news. Having lived at Westbrook in the 1950s and 1960s, Dreamland was a very big part of a life of fun.

Coachloads from London, mods and rockers, everyone came down and spent money.

We travel on coach trips all over talking to different people and 99 per cent remember Dreamland with fond memories.

We take our grandchildren to theme parks now and most are packed with over the top prices. But people pay it for a day out so we are

sure Dreamland will be a success.

**J Hall**, Bournemouth

## Ageism in the care for the depressed

WITH reference to the investment of Kent County Council of £500,000 into a befriending scheme, this may help many become less isolated.

What concerns me is when an elderly person becomes so depressed they require in-patient treatment.

St Martin's Mental Health Hospital in Canterbury has mothballed all elderly wards except for the Cranmer ward. The proposed new build for 2014 is still awaiting the first brick to be laid.

I question why the Kent and Medway health partnership have

priority for a new build for the so-called working age group, when the previous unit only opened in 2003?

It's time for a change in ageism for our services.

**Gay Hughes**, Canterbury

## Cough up cost for election councillor

I THINK Councillor Chris Neal (KoS, 'Who will be next to leap upon Farage's Ukip bandwagon') should resign his district council seat and stump up the cash for a by-election in Cowden and Hever himself.

His former Conservative colleague Douglas Carswell MP is at least showing the courage of his convictions by re-standing in Clacton.

Cllr Neal should demonstrate to all of those who voted for him before whether his defection to Ukip was simply a cheap publicity stunt, or whether he is ready to once again face the local electorate under his new purple colours, instead of blue.

**Dr Alan Bullion**, Lib Dem parliamentary spokesman for Sevenoaks and Swanley

## Big three parties treat us as morons

I WOULD like to say how much I agree with Phil Granger (KoS, letters, 31.08).

He is absolutely right about the three main political parties. They treat the British public like morons.

They promise you one thing in their manifesto, then do something else behind your back. You will not get a referendum from the Tories on Europe as they will renege on this as they have on everything else.

Give Ukip a chance; they can't do any worse.

**Rod Dryland**, Ashford

## Counting cost of Scotland's vote

AM I the only person who has suddenly realised the potential implications of Scottish independence?

From something that was happening at a distance, it now seems very close to home.

From our currency, our defence, our parliament and our flag, to name but some, we could soon all be living in a very different country.

A vote for independence will be permanent and seismic in its effect on our day to day lives.

I hope we remain united.

**G Hudson**, Maidstone

## KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles which tie in with our parent company Archant's overall mission statement.

Archant's mission statement is: "We bring together motivated buyers and sellers through the creation of unique and compelling content and community expertise." This is summed up in the strapline 'Inspiring Communities'.

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- 4) Not be overly sensational.
- 5) Have a sense of humour.
- 6) Have an easily understood division between

news, comment and advertising.

- 7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
- 8) Highlight topical issues of concern to people living in the county.
- 9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.
- 10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.






## Tall ship at Greenhithe by **Andy Fernie,** from Dartford

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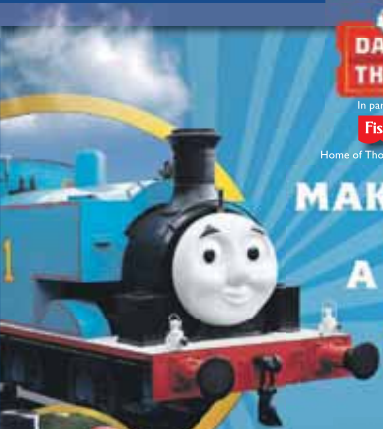
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**FEMALE** 38, attractive, African, single mum, seeks male, 35-50 for nights out, socialising, friendship and fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412793

**JASMINE**, 22yrs, seeks older gent for daytime meetings as she works a nightshift most days. Box: 4495860 Text Only

**PETITE** slim blonde 39yrs, pretty big blue eyes, looking for similar easygoing older male to put a spark back into my life, enjoy nights in/out and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412327

**SALLY**, 36yrs, married but husband works away seeks discreet gent any age for fun only. Text only Box: 4492484

**ATTRACTIVE** size 16 and intelligent woman, likes children and laughs, looking for like-minded partner for relationship. Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4387911

**FEMALE** seeking male for adult fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413809

**MAUREEN**, discreet sensual lady, 42yrs seeks daytime fun at her home. ACA. Tel No: 0905 002 1961 Box No: 405297

**SAMANTHA**, solvent, sensual business woman, 38yrs, travels a lot and seeks fun on the road. I'm married so please be discreet. Box: 4495859 Text Only

**68YR** old widow, seeking company of a male, 68-75 for friendship, likes cinema, theatre, nights in, meals out, seaside walks. Wants someone to help me love again. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413689

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**CHRISTINA**, curvy beauty, 27yrs, own home, very very adventurous seeks no strings fun and frolics. Can accommodate and will answer all calls. Tel No: 0905 002 1957 Box No: 410127

**PROMOTIONAL ADVERT OF THE WEEK**



**ANN**, young looking 40yrs seeks broadminded man of any age/location for no strings discreet times, games and more. ACA. Tel No: 0905 002 1936 Box: 412369

**JANE** 29yr old horsey female, loves the outdoors, cycling, as well as duvet days, WLM not too serious male for a hopefully normal relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412315

**SUSAN** seeking nice male, medium build, 35, easygoing, likes music, nights in. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 406779

**FIONA**, young 32yrs, seeks uncomplicated fun with chap any age or area, texts only please, I'm nervous on the phone. Box: 4495861 Text Only

**KATIE** 26yr old pretty slim blue eyed blonde looking for evening entertainment with open-minded discreet guy, any age. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412319

**JENNI**, sensual lady, 23yrs seeks mature experienced man for no strings, daytime fun. Box: 4459440 Text only

**GILLY**, voluptuous well groomed lady, seeks man to massage and pamper. Married exciting men please apply. Tel No: 0905 002 1933 Box No: 412933

**LINDY**, 43yrs young, married with husband away. Seeks discreet gent any age/area for no strings. Box: 4459439 Text only

**FREYA** 33 6ft blonde, loves dancing and have a good time, employed, own home, one son, seeking similar laidback guy/dad for dates, chats and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412045

**MARILYN** really nice curvy tactile female, loves romantic walks, cosy nights in, quality times, looking for nice male to spend time and fall in love with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411871

**JAN** 5ft 6ins, dark hair/eyes, nice smile, likes music, travel, countryside, animals, employed, OHAC, looking for companionship with similar lonely heart. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411865

**SARAH** 25 petite slim attractive blonde student, enjoys keeping fit, looking good, socialising, going out, being a mum WLM similar fun genuine guy. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411537

**JULIE** attractive outgoing female with a very young attitude, loves running, living life, travel, WLM someone special to make my life complete, hope you're out there. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411513

**LINDA** 37, green eyes, attractive, bubbly size 12, enjoys cosy nights in, text chats, seeking tallish fun guy for meals out, pubs, clubs and spending quality times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411033

**64YR** old lady, seeking male for friendship, companionship, outings and interesting conversation. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411975

**CAROLINE** 39yr old pretty blonde looking for handsome caring man to put the sparkle back into my life and make each other feel special. Call me. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411891

**JEWISH** widow, 67, loves animals, seeks genuine, Jewish gent, 68-73 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410547

**MARY** 5ft 6in size 12 blonde, nice personality, good conversationalist, interesting, lots of interests WLM ikeminded caring, happy male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412169

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**PHILLY**, 20yrs, just left college, seeks older man for daytime fun, must be discreet as she has strict parents. Text only Box: 4492485

**SHARON** 32yrs and still soul searching for Mr Right, I enjoy keeping in shape, caring for people, seeking loving respectful guy who also knows a good time. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412049

**SLIM** petite, attractive brunette, 56, British/Russian origin, excellent cook/home maker, seeks cultured male for serious relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412129

**KEEN** cyclist 58, non-competitive, seeks similar female for sea wall, countryside ride, walking etc for fun, laughs and whatever. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413337

**RITA** divorced care worker with no ties, 5ft 1ins, dark hair, enjoys meals out, cosy nights in, seeking male 45-55 with GSOH and similar interests. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411775

**JANET** 5ft 8ins, slim, 12, pretty, green eyes, brown hair, seeking male companion for friendship hopefully leading to a relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411689

**MELANIE** tall curvy attractive bubbly female who loves meals out, cosy nights in with a nice wine, walking, seeks professional male with outgoing GSOH. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411509

**33YR** old sick of being single working mum, OHAC, likes the simple things in life, looking for romantic, honest guy with GSOH for cosy nights in and fun nights out. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411887

**CINDY** 31 attractive, size 12 brown eyed blonde, new to this but sick of passing up potential soul mate so thought I wd give it a go. ACA Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411873

## Men Seeking

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**RETIRED** engineer 67, likes meals out, nights in, holidays, seeking slim lady, 60-65, young at heart to wine/dine, friendship and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413161

**RETIRED** male, seeks attractive female for friendship and fun, any age/status/colour. East Kent, can travel. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413133

**AMABLE** intelligent male, 77, light smoker, seeks slim lady for friendship/companionship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413127

**EX** headmaster, tall, dark, seeks adventurous lady, status unimportant. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412263

**JAMES**, 45yrs, solvent caring gent, recently divorced seeks genuine lady to wine and dine. Single mums welcome. Box: 4459441 Text only

**67YR** old male, slim, 5ft 5ins, many interests, likes holidays, meals out, seeking slim female 55-65 with GSOH to share TLC. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414023

**BLUE** eyed male, fit, toned, likes socialising, travel, OHAC, seeks female, 40-56 for loving, caring relationship. Tel No: 413981

**MALE** seeking Asian female, any age, outgoing, likes outdoors for fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413965

**KEEN** cyclist 58, non-competitive, seeks similar female for sea wall, countryside ride, walking etc for fun, laughs and whatever. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413337

**BARRY** divorced, 6ft, well built, seeking fun time girl for good times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412717

**MALE** seeking friendship of mature woman, smoker. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412703

**SINGLE** young lady, slim-medium build, 24-38 sought by mature male in Canterbury. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 405697

**MALE** 48, looking for fun loving female to enjoy outdoor activities, nights in and meals out. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 392212

**DAVE** 62, 5ft 10ins, slim, semi-retired builder, seeks no strings discreet daytime meets for adult fun. Surrey. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410899

**MATURE** male, looking for discreet meetings with female. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413039

**FRANK** 54, 5ft 10ins, blue eyes, blond hair, smoker, seeking friendship with mature female, 40-60. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412893

**COMPANY** Director, mature, late 50s, seeking female, any age for mutually rewarding friendship. Kent/Surrey area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412819

**IAN** 5ft 11ins, likes rock/roll, singing, making people laugh, seeking someone special. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412799

**WRITER** tall, slim, dark hair, generous, seeking broadminded lady for fun times. Any age/status. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412749

**JAMES** young, free and single, please give me a call if interested. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412345

**SUE** optimistic divorced lady with OHAC, good job, enjoys meals out, cinema, countryside, pub lunches, looking for likeminded outgoing happy male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410467

**LADY** 60, size 12, easy going, likes animals, seeks male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411301

**SUE** attractive, likes walks, gardening, social drinks, looking for male to settle down with, 60's. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410231

**LYN** 34yrs, pretty petite dark haired female, loves music, meals out, quiet drinks out, seeking caring male with GSOH who can make me feel special again. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410137

**CAROLINE** blonde curvy very active lady who loves to socialise, countryside, seeking similar caring male for LTR and to share good times with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409413

**WORLD** war veteran seeking happy lady with nice conversation in the Kent area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411133

**PAUL** own business, looking for daytime fun with lady. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411227

**DAVE** 65, retired, N/S, likes gardening, music, meals out, holidays, seeks female. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410971

**PHIL** 6ft, clean shaven, blue eyes, smart, likes sports, walks, films, theatre, music, animals, GSOH, seeks female, 40-55 for fun and friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410351

**BESIDE** the Pointe. Literate self-possessing, leggy, kindred spirit sought by white male for elevating the bar. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412223

**45YR** old male, likes poetry, seeks companion for relationship. Herne Bay area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411993

**CHIPS** on the pier, walks on the beach/countryside, VGSOH, 58yrs old, fit male, seeks female for laughs and love and whatever. NE Kent. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411725

**MALE** 5ft 11ins, good-looking, athletic build, looking for discreet fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411477

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**ADVENTUROUS** male, mid 50's, seeks similar lady for fun and mutually enjoyable discreet relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410339

**CHRIS** widower likes DIY, gardening, nights out, rock and roll, N/S, looking for LTR with female. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410191

**MALE** seeking attractive female for discreet fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409189

**DEREK** 5ft 11ins, slim-medium build, loving, caring, seeking black lady for possible relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410511

**EARLY** 50's single male, smoker, seeking likeminded female for interests, sign language interpreter, seeks slim-medium build female, 24-42 for LTR. Single mum welcome. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 405697

**PROFESSIONAL** male, early 40's, fun loving, independent, OHAC, seeks warm, sincere, fun loving female for LTR. Animals/children welcome. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409745

**BROWN** eyed white mature, handsome male, seeking black female, 18-50 for discreet no strings adult fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410377

**ATTRACTIVE** white gent, 48, 56ft, romantic, easy going, GSOH, seeking young lady, 60-75 for quality discreet fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410025

**TALL** black male, 45, likes meals out, good company, romantic, GSOH, light hearted, seeks easy-going female. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409621

**RETIRED** male, seeks no strings discreet meets with slim-medium build female, any age for adult fun. Dover. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409533

**MALE** seeking female to love and be loved back. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 408941

**FIT** fellow, full of fun, 58, seeks to find fanciable lady for free and fascinating future for LTR. Find your jar half full. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 405857

**BLACK** male, looking for 1-2-1 relationship with laid back, understanding female. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 406221

**DIVORCED** male, seeks Oriental lady, likes animals, music, will take care of you forever. Thanet area, willing to travel. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409963

**PROFESSIONAL** male, early 40's, fun loving, OHAC, seeks warm, sincere female for LTR. Animals/children welcome. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409961

**CANTERBURY** mature male, medium build, GSOH, varied interests, sign language interpreter, seeks slim-medium build female, 24-42 for LTR. Single mum welcome. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 405697

**PROFESSIONAL** male, early 40's, fun loving, independent, OHAC, seeks warm, sincere, fun loving female for LTR. Animals/children welcome. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409745

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See page 51 »

Go Ape's mission to climb revenues to new heights



See page 54 »

Apprenticeships hit the right spot with employees



# BusinessQuarter

ARCHANT } KOS MEDIA

Autumn 2014

## A good year for crowdfunding?

With its popularity growing, one of the county's top winemakers is turning to the latest craze in the hope of raising £3m for expansion. **Jamie Weir** reports

**A**WARD-WINNING wine and beer maker Chapel Down is set to become the first listed company to offer shares via a 'crowdfunding' platform.

Crowdfunding is the latest method deployed by various ventures to raise much need equity.

Most notably used in the entertainment world – where music acts have financed the creation of CDs by giving fans special incentives to invest such as signed items, or in independent film productions where donors have seen

their name in the credits – it is facilitated online.

Those signing up and investing in Chapel Down will acquire shares at 28p each, with the producer hoping to raise just over £3 million.

Shares will be traded on the ISDX Growth Market.

It comes a little over a year since the winemaker raised some £4.35m through an equity issue at 17p per share.

As is the norm, this was mainly

Continued on page 49 »



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KEA

Week ending September 14, 2014 **47**



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**RUNNING SMOOTHLY:** Chapel Down's success has seen it expanding, hence this push for new investment

## « Continued from page 47

achieved through approaching and attracting large investors and institutions. The money raised allowed it to plant new vines and expand its offering.

But as its growth continues, it is now launching this more unusual method.

Chief executive at Chapel Down, Frazer Thompson, explained: "We have raised money from institutional investors in the past, but the wine business is about passion and people, not just money.

"We saw this as a chance to recruit thousands of small shareholders who can help us grow the brand and the business by being active and interested. Even more so if they enjoy really good wine and beer.

"Our smaller investors are more like pilgrims in their passion and commitment to Chapel Down. They are fantastic for us; we want to recruit more of them and make sure they are well looked after."

It will offer the new shares to private investors in order to raise money to fund growth in the business to help meet growing demand for its products.

Mr Thompson added: "The pro-

ceeds are being used to increase the production of both still and sparkling wines and beers, and for improving systems, winery equipment, hiring new people and marketing purposes.

"The company has planted new vines across Kent to start the journey to satisfy demand for Chapel Down products.

"We are already admitted to trading on the ISDX Growth Market and

**'Our smaller investors are more like pilgrims in their passion and commitment to Chapel Down. They are fantastic for us; we want to recruit more of them'**

this is the first time that we are aware of that a listed company has undertaken an equity crowdfunding campaign anywhere in the world.

"We are passionate about our current customers, as well as acquiring new ones, and we strongly believe that raising funds through a crowd-funding campaign is the perfect way

to enable our current customers to easily become shareholders as well as recruiting new customers who are interested in investing in us."

Demand currently outstrips supply of Chapel Down's wine and craft beers. It also wants to expand its hospitality facility at Tenterden.

Investors can put in as little as £10, but incentives will be offered for those pledging more than £140.

For those who invest £560 or more, a 33 per cent discount on Chapel Down wines bought direct from the winery alongside a range of other discounts, such as a discount in its restaurant, and a free tour once a year will help to sweeten the deal.

Mr Thompson continued: "Investors not only get a share of a proven brand and business in an exciting and interesting market, but they get excellent discounts to encourage them to buy and spread the word, and they can also sell their shares on a recognised exchange.

"We've convinced people that we make great products and now we need to make a great deal more of them to satisfy demand. That's where the investment will help."

The brand is widely stocked by top outlets such as the Savoy, Harvey Nichols and Selfridges.

KEA

## Business ...in brief

### Selling the county to the States at Las Vegas tourism event

TOURISM chiefs have jetted out to the lights and glamour of Las Vegas in a bid to raise awareness of the charms of Kent to the travel industry.

Representatives from Visit Kent and Canterbury Cathedral have travelled to Nevada for Destination Britain North America (DBNA), an event dedicated to connecting North American travel product buyers to British suppliers.

Explained Sandra Matthews-Marsh, chief executive of tourism champions Visit Kent: "North America is a key target for most leading destinations, and for Kent the product market fits in perfectly.

"DBNA provides the perfect opportunity for us to build new relationships and cement existing ones. We have 75 confirmed appointments with buyers over the two day event, and having the chance to meet key buyers face-to-face like this is invaluable."

The event runs from September 14-16.



**TRIP:** Las Vegas



### Watch marketplace in \$10m investment

WATCHFINDER, a pre-owned watch resale marketplace based in Maidstone, has secured a \$10m (£6.8m) financing boost.

The funds have been pumped in by Piton Capital and Beringea. The funding will be used to broaden the company's inventory and offering and support expansion plans.

**SOLD:** Two hotels in Kent

### Kew acquires 19 Holiday Inns in portfolio boost

KEW Green Holdings has added to its portfolio of Holiday Inn hotels after acquiring a further 19 - including sites in Ashford and Rochester.

The deal, for an undisclosed sum, was struck with LRG Holdings, and means the hotel group now has 38 Holiday Inns within its portfolio.

Kent hotels include those on Canterbury Road, Ashford, and Maidstone Road, Rochester.

All 19 hotels will continue to trade under the Holiday Inn branding, but will undergo a refurbishment programme which will be rolled out shortly.

Holiday Inn operates on a franchise agreement through owner the InterContinental Hotels Group.

### Hundreds to flock to theatre's job fair

A JOBS fair takes place at the Assembly Hall Theatre in Tunbridge Wells this Wednesday, offering information on local vacancies, apprenticeships and volunteering opportunities.

It runs from 10am to 3pm on September 17. A similar event held in March attracted 400 people.

### Confidence rises on banks lending funds

THE majority of SMEs in the south east believe they would be successful if they applied for a bank loan to fund their investment plans, with two thirds feeling confident they would be accepted, according to new research by Clydesdale Bank.

It demonstrates an increasing confidence within the market.

### Government cash to spark housebuilding

SITES across Kent are set to see government money to unlock 'shovel ready' projects for housing.

The funding, which is part of the government's £525 million Builders Finance Fund, was set up to kick start projects which stalled during the housing crash in 2008, while also supporting the construction industry.

The funding aims to accelerate

construction, which the government says will support over 13,000 new jobs nationally.

Sites in Ashford, Dover, Sevenoaks, Shepway and Thanet are set to benefit from the money after being short-listed by the government.

Collectively, it would mean that 432 new houses were built across the county.

# Kent Business Profile



**Tim Kidd** Chief Executive of  
Kent Channel Chamber of Commerce

## Kent Channel Chamber of Commerce

I have worked in East Kent businesses most of my life, starting out in retail then the travel industry. For the last 10 years, I was general manager for BNI Kent.

Why should a business in the Thanet, Dover and Shepway district join their local Chamber? We provide the information, advice and services which help ensure the business success of our members at a local level, but also act as a gateway to a vast national network and a host of nationwide benefits, advice and influence.

We connect and promote people and represent them as far as policies are concerned and increase their profits where we can. For example, we offer members a healthcare policy for employees, AA insurance and recovery, plus free 24x7 legal help.

We create a level playing field and the more engagement they have with us, the more we can do for them.

Monthly breakfast networking briefings are held in each region, using different members' venues, such as the Turner Contemporary and Quex Barn, with a guest speaker each time.

I want us to be the essential resource for every business person in our region, helping them in every way we can. This involves dealing with representatives of local councils, with KCC and with national Government, working out what funding opportunities are available for local regeneration on a county and district level, working out the funding opportunities for different projects and getting involved in apprenticeships.

Kent Channel Chamber of Commerce  
32-40 Tontine Street  
Folkestone  
Kent, CT20 1JU  
01303 722227



**Steve Leahey**  
Principal of the new Leigh UTC

## Leigh UTC

Leigh UTC opened to students on Monday 8th September 2014.

The Leigh UTC specialises in Engineering and Computer Sciences offering students a superb education in a state-of-the-art building that will give them the specialist skills, knowledge and experience to have a successful career in the technology sector.

Steve Leahey "At the moment, you're probably facing some very important choices about your education. You'll know that getting these decisions right is highly likely to influence your future career and whether you reach the heights you want to reach"

At the ground-breaking Leigh UTC we know we are at the very forefront of education for Post 16 students. Our approach to learning, which involves lots of specialised input from industry and academic partners will provide you with a great foundation for the future.

We offer sixth form students the chance to tailor their studies to fit their individual interests, abilities and ambitions. Alongside their academic studies students will spend one day a week in a work experience programme.

The Leigh UTC offers different progression routes, which include 'A Levels', Level 3 Vocational Qualifications and Advanced Apprenticeships in Engineering and IT.

All our students will have the opportunity to follow professional qualifications, which include Cisco Academy, Microsoft Academy and AutoDesk CAD

The Leigh UTC will be holding an open day on Saturday 4th October and an open evening on Wednesday 15th October for parents and students to attend.

Further details can be obtained from our website, [www.theleighutc.org.uk](http://www.theleighutc.org.uk)

The Leigh UTC  
The Bridge Development  
Brunel Way, Dartford  
Kent, DA1 5TF  
01474 700800



**Jo James** Chief Executive of  
Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce

## Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce

I joined the Chamber more than 20 years ago as an administrator and have performed virtually every role in the business. It's fair to say that a lot has changed over the years.

The Chamber was a town based membership organisation formed in the 1900's but over the years we have become more involved in the business landscape of Kent & Medway and now work with partners from the UK and abroad to ensure Kent & Medway businesses have the best opportunities available.

These changes have meant that my role as Chief Exec is broader, more challenging and more varied than it has ever been. Moreover, the recent economic hardships have meant I spend a lot more time working with the Government and local policy makers to ensure the right support is given to business.

To influence policy I use a number of forums and sit on the board of the Southeast Local Enterprise Partnership, the Business Advisory Board and the Kent & Medway Economic Partnership to name but a few.

In addition to my representation work, I take an active role in the leading and managing our team of 21 staff who operate from our Maidstone, Ashford and Gravesend offices. They in turn look after more than 1500 members, run 160 events each year, support businesses to trade internationally, provide start up advice to more than 1000 entrepreneurs and ensure all the businesses in Kent & Medway know what publicly funded support is available to them.

To sum up my role, I would say I was a Leader, Diplomat, Manager, Politician and Host with the ability to magic 25hrs out of every day.

Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce  
Ashford Business Point  
Waterbrook Avenue Sevington  
Ashford  
01233 503838



**Kevan Ford**  
Director of HK Safety Services

## HK Safety Services

Having started the company with my partner Hilary White in 2007, we were immediately hit by a recession that as usual had an adverse effect on the construction industry which we were predominantly designed to serve. Despite the difficulties we managed to thrive and grow and continue to do so; currently serving around two-hundred clients.

We endeavour to offer a pragmatic approach to help small to medium enterprises break through the bureaucracy and apply health and safety in a sensible way. Of course in order to do this you need a great deal of subject knowledge, industry experience and the ability to research properly; all of which we pride ourselves on. Spending a great deal of time and money on continual professional development.

Serving the construction industry there is a distinct need to be flexible and able to react to instant demands but for those in the business of giving advice or thinking about entering it, we cannot stress strongly enough the importance of not 'over-steering' your knowledge boundaries. We spend a great deal of time and money on continual professional development to improve our services to the benefit of both our clients and us.

It is our belief that you can run a business and be friendly and by offering a wide range of services such as training, site inspections, ISO systems together with the more usual consultancy services (and accident investigation for the unfortunate few) our clients need not look elsewhere.

Measurement of success can be evaluated in many ways but we get genuine, great satisfaction from helping others and providing people with work.

The Old Granary, Hanover Mill  
The Forstal, Mersham  
Nr. Ashford  
Kent, TN25 6NU  
01233 720113





# Branching out was natural decision for these high flyers

Outdoor adventure firm Go Ape, which has two popular sites in the county, has been one of the biggest start-up successes over the last 10 years. **Jamie Weir** finds out why monkey business means big money, and how close the company came to failure

**I**N A world where we are constantly being told obesity and sedentary activities are the norm, one company has been fighting to keep the adventurous spirit alive. It is hard to believe that Go Ape was only founded in March 2002, such has been the company's meteoric rise.

Just over 12 years has seen the organisation grow from a start-up to an international business, with 28 sites currently in the UK, and a further seven places in the US.

Kent has not been slow to go on its map, with hugely popular complexes set within the picturesque surroundings of Bedgbury Pinetum, near Tunbridge Wells opening in 2007 and Leeds Castle in 2008.

Both attract big crowds and significant revenues – the company says they are among the best performing in the country – with the Bedgbury site alone pulling in an average of 24,000 annual visitors; both from corporate business keen for team building exercises, and families wanting to get the blood pumping.

But it could have all turned out very differently.

Go Ape managing director, Jerome Mayhew, explained to KoS how it nearly fell in only its second year.

He said: "The company was founded by my brother Tristan and his wife Rebecca.

"It started as a lifestyle choice, as the pair had been working in very corporate jobs for a number of years.

"They went on holiday in France and saw a flier for a similar type of activity. When they were walking into the forest, before they saw anything, they just heard screams of excitement and exhilaration and just knew there was something more than that corporate lifestyle.

"When they got back to the UK they looked into setting up their own version, and approached the Forestry Commission, who, as the big players in woods in the country obviously hold a lot of sway.

"The first course was built in 2002, and by 2003 they were already thinking about expanding. It just took off so quickly. Plans were put in place and three new courses were built. But that quick growth led to a serious cash-flow problem, which meant the

company also went bust.

"As a start-up, despite the strong growth, when one of the sites took longer to get planning permission than we thought it would, we started to really struggle.

"We went to the RBS, who were our bank at the time, and asked them if we could get a bridging loan to get us through the few months where we were struggling. They said that they'd put it to their board, but that it would probably take around 12 weeks to get a decision.

"We would have gone under if we had needed to wait for that length of time. So we went to the bank of mum and dad. Thankfully, we were able to borrow enough money for the few months to get us through that crisis.

"It was a real learning experience for the business. As a small start-up we had felt confident we were bringing in lots of money and that we could afford to keep going.

"After that experience we took on a finance officer to make sure that situation never happened again."

After that initial blip, Go Ape began to grow at a tremendous speed. The



**GRIP ON FUTURE:** Jerome Mayhew, of Go Ape, is excited by company's new plans

company began expanding at a rate of around five sites per year for the next few years. That level of growth proved sustainable, with the group turning a strong profit which allowed it to plough more capital back into the business.

By 2010, Go Ape was also eyeing opportunity further afield, and decided to enter the US market. The activity proved just as popular as it was here, and Go Ape managed to open seven courses in the next four years.

Mr Mayhew added: "There is a huge appetite across America, with so much potential for expanding. We were successful as soon as we entered the market."

And expand they will, with the group planning to almost double its offering across the pond by opening a further five sites in 2015.

It is also set to offer up some exciting new activities closer to home.

Mr Mayhew said: "We are looking

to open up a number of new sites in the UK. There is still so much scope for growth. At the moment we have a planning application in for a new site at Battersea.

"If that gets the go-ahead and is successful, it opens up a whole new market in urban sites for us. We are also intending to grow the traditional woodland business at least as fast, if not in an accelerated format, across the UK. There is so much scope. Geographically, we have barely scratched the surface."

Go Ape is also set to diversify, with Mr Mayhew hinting that November may well hold a significant announcement from the company.

He told KoS: "We are going to be announcing a new business.

"I don't want to say anything right now, as we want it to be a surprise, but suffice to say, I am extremely excited for our future."

## Improvements needed but global report is encouraging read



**INSIGHT:** Duncan Cochrane-Dyet

THE World Economic Forum has just published its 565-page Global Competitiveness Report 2014-2015.

It makes for interesting reading, with the UK rising in the international rankings by one place to ninth, whereas in Europe, Germany falls back to fifth.

In the east, China has moved up one place to 28th, and further west the United States bounces back from fifth to third.

So what is driving the UK's competitiveness?

Firstly, the report cites bold monetary policy as the catalyst to the UK's recovery.

We also have an efficient labour market, and have created a supportive environment to allow innovative and sophisticated businesses to 'spring up and develop' – this is critical to our

**Duncan Cochrane-Dyet**, a partner at the Maidstone office of chartered accountants MHA MacIntyre Hudson, examines how the UK economy is finally bouncing back...

future economic growth and competitiveness.

Not all is good, and there are improvements we must make. Education needs attention especially maths and science (63rd in the rankings) to allow innovation to develop into the future.

Access to loans (82nd) is a further limiting factor.

The word 'innovation' crops up a lot, and indeed in Kent we can see the importance: for example Kent

Science Park, near Sittingbourne, Discovery Park in Sandwich, the new KIMs site in Maidstone.

We also seem to be stronger in the county on the two major issues the report identifies – Kent has a strong educational system, and my experience of interviewing recent applicants to MHA MacIntyre Hudson is that we have some excellent young people coming through.

Our clients, in the main, have

reasonable access to lending from the banks, however let's be realistic here; bank lending is a commercial process which requires a level of security over repayment, and many young innovative businesses are just not able to provide this.

There are alternatives, though, for example Kent County Council is supporting the Tiger and Escalate programmes, which provide loans to enterprises where a bank loan may not be appropriate.

As we land back at our desks after summer holidays many business leaders, refreshed by the break, are looking at their strategy. There is lots of support out there to turn plans into reality.

After all we are not the most competitive country out there (yet) – Switzerland is.



# BusinessQuarter | Profiles

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It is open every weekend during term time with workshops during the school holidays.

Early Stages classes run alongside the main Stagecoach schools, for children aged four to six. The class is split into three 30-minute sessions. Class sizes are kept small (15 max) to enable every child to get the most from the skills learned.

Its Main Schools, which are suitable for children aged six to 18, run every week during term time, at weekends and evenings.

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All its teachers are DBS (formerly CRB) checked so children and teenagers can work in a safe and protected environment. Fees work out at approx £9 per hour, which offers outstanding value for money for quality performing arts training, small class sizes, exams, medals, performances, magazine subscription, optional representation by The Stagecoach Agency which secures professional work for hundreds of children, and the many other extras that are offered by Stagecoach Canterbury.



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# 'There has never been a better time to consider an apprenticeship'... so try it

By Chris Britcher

chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

**T**HE rise in popularity of apprenticeships shows little sign of slowing – with both employers and employees benefiting from the on-the-job training opportunity.

Figures released earlier this year revealed more than half a million apprenticeships started during the 2012-2013 academic year, and everyting points to that figure increasing.

Especially when, next year, the age youngsters can leave full-time education or training rises to 18.

One of the organisations championing apprenticeships is KATO – the Kent Association of Training Organisations. It works closely with the majority of training providers and colleges across Kent and Medway which deliver apprenticeships.

Lindsay Collins, director of operations at KATO, explains: "Apprenticeships are available at intermediate, advanced and higher – which would be a degree and masters – level, covering more than 170 industries and 1,500 job roles: from advertising to youth work, environmental engineering

and accountancy. An apprentice gains real qualifications. Quality is key to apprenticeships. All apprenticeships must be at least 12 months and lead to a national qualification that is respected by employers around the world."

But many critics suggest employers see them simply as cheap labour and will release them once the minimum term is reached.

That, according to KATO, is not the case. It points out all apprentices must receive the minimum wage and work at least 30 hours a week.

Adds Lindsay Collins: "After finishing, the majority of apprentices will stay in employment, with two-thirds staying with the same employer."

"A quarter of all former apprentices had received a promotion within 12 months of finishing, and of those in work, two-thirds reported taking on more responsibility in their job."

"There has never been a better time to consider an apprenticeship."

"We really support the new government drive for it to become the norm for young people to choose between an apprenticeship or university as equally prestigious routes to a great career and secure their finances in the years ahead."



**CHANGE:** Government wants apprenticeships to rival university placement

## Boris to officially unveil college site

MAYOR of London Boris Johnson will official open Bexley College's new Erith campus next month.

The £20m new site opens for students next week and will be officially unveiled by the politician on October 7.

The state-of-the-art campus is in Walnut Tree Road.

## Uni in the running for 'most improved'

THE University of Kent has been shortlisted for 'most improved student experience' in the Times Higher Education Awards 2014.

It was nominated after organisers polled some 20,000 students across the UK.

The winners will be announced at the awards event on November 27.

## Ignite a passion for science in Chatham

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By Steve Loader  
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

## 1st Drive

### Citroën C4 Cactus

Price:	£12,990
Driving appeal:	★★★★
Image:	★★★★★
Space:	★★★★★
Value:	★★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★
How green?:	★★★★★
Best rival:	Kia Soul

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## Nothing prickly about Citroën's new Cactus

**C**ITROËN had already announced that it is becoming not one, but two brands, having decided to establish DS as a standalone premium marque.

It has now followed this by launching surely the most interesting car of the year – the all-new Citroën C4 Cactus.

Both moves cure a schizophrenia that has dogged the French marque since the 1950s when it already manufactured one of the great people's cars, the legendary 2CV, and then launched the original DS premium dynasty.

Perhaps the contrast between two equally famous products confused Citroën and customers alike – was it a budget or a premium brand? Anyhow, Citroën got into a muddle and finally ended up owned by arch-rival Peugeot.

More recently given its head – or corporate therapy – Citroën now seems to know what it is and where it wants to go.

Hence spinning-off the young and successful DS, and concentrating on what Citroën does best – what I call pragmatic innovation.

This inspired the cheap and versatile 2CV and it's clear that similar straight thinking was applied to the Cactus – a car for current times.

It's a lot of motor for the money (from £12,990 to £18,190), 20 per cent cheaper to run, says Citroën, has eye-catching looks, and is a distinctive alternative to the market's lookalike family hatchbacks.

Citroën calls it a 'crosshatch', but the Cactus is better than any glib marketing speak; this is a car that defies the imminent threat of cheap Far East imports by suggesting "you may copy Western designs, but you

Consistently innovative French marque has nurtured something special in a desert of family hatchback look-alikes, giving this car a 'crosshatch' branding

can't innovate like this."

It urges discussion with its low slung SUV looks: slightly raised ride height, wheel arch protection, short overhangs and roof bars, plus unique 'Airbump' polyurethane side panels.

These are aesthetic – available in various colours to add to the Cactus' formidable customisation palette – and able to absorb minor impacts, including protection from 'Mum's bum' situations where a hard-pressed parent battles to belt in Junior and simply uses her derriere to keep the door open – with consequent damage to the car parked next door.

I pointed out at the Cactus launch that it might have been even more useful if the Airbumps extended to the rear edge of the back doors on the Cactus itself...

Other nice touches include 'Magic Wash' wipers, with jets incorporated into the wiper arms so the water goes where it needs to, wide and comfy front seats and the overall funkiness of the cabin including a proper dash top glovebox made possible by relocating the airbag overhead.

Best of all is how easy the Cactus is to live with: it's 200 kilos lighter than an equivalent Citroën C4 – more than the weight of two average men – which makes it responsive and outstandingly economical, offering up 91mpg fuel economy and low CO2

emissions from a road tax exempt 82g/km.

The suspension is conventional yet follows the great Citroën tradition for bump absorption, while being well controlled on the corners.

Engine choice is a tough one: Citroën reckons a 50/50 split between petrol (four choices of powertrain) and diesel (two), but the three-cylinder petrols are cheaper to buy, and work so well in this lighter car that you question the expert prediction.

It will be interesting to see if Citroën can now grow more 'Cacti' in other market deserts apart from the samey looking family hatchback sector – another successful sub-brand perhaps?



### Other view...

#### the Petrolhead

It looks and surely will be dull. Hybrids may emit less CO<sub>2</sub>, but I reckon they also reduce the driver's oxygen, sending him to sleep.

#### She says

Wow! Space, value, plus arresting looks and customisation. This is what Citroën does best. Why buy a boring old family hatch now?

#### the Eco-warrior

A winner on all counts. Low emissions, fab economy, low running costs, funky looks... what's not to like about this game-changing vehicle?

### STRAIGHT TO THE POINT:

Citroën's all-new 'crosshatch' Cactus promises a lot of car for your money with a host of innovation to keep competitors thinking

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**MOVING ON UP:** Kia's stylish and spacious Ceed Sportswagon is a fine addition to the Korean marque's already excellent line-up



**Y**OU do get the feeling Kia's design supremo, Peter Schreyer, won't let any car leave his studios looking ugly – even those specifically created for unglamorous jobs.

Witness Kia's classy looking Carens five/seven-seat people carrier, or the car reviewed here, the sleek estate version of the Korean marque's Ceed hatchback.

Following the current vogue for fancy loadlugging names, Kia prefers to call it the SW or Sportswagon.

It is indeed sporty looking and features Kia's trademark 'tiger nose' grille, flanked by distinctive swept back headlamp clusters with upmarket LED running lights.

For on-road presence then, no Ceed need doff its cap to rivals, including VW's family hatchback sector leading Golf – Kia admits this was its benchmark when developing the Mark II Ceed.

What's even more impressive though is how quickly Kia has achieved this near parity with the VW star; no-one would have bet on this 10 years ago, before the game-changing original Ceed arrived in 2007.

Conceived and built in Europe for Europe and highlighting Kia's progress and value for money, it also pioneered the brand's still unchallenged seven-year/100,000-mile warranty.

From that moment, Kia has created several other stars, plus the 2012 second-generation Ceed.

In some areas, it still cannot quite compete with the Golf and its other big rivals, the Ford Focus and Vauxhall Astra, but looks and Kia value – from £16,445 for the Ceed Sportswagon – plus acclaimed reliability backed by that warranty suggests badge snobbery has no place here.

Okay, keen drivers may find the handling less interesting and despite useful Comfort, Normal and Sporty settings for the steering, you don't get too much feedback.

But most buyers will simply enjoy the car's solidity and build quality, a roomy cabin with good rear legroom and a dashboard that mirrors the quality and practicality of the Golf yet shows more flair.

# Loadlugging Ceed is looking the part

Sportswagon can pile loads in the back in much the same way it can pile on the style and value, writes **Steve Loader**



In Sportswagon guise, the Ceed also outranks its Golf equivalent by offering a generous 528-litre boot or 1,642-litre load space with seats folded flat – the VW delivers 505 litres and 1,495 respectively.

And the Kia is also way ahead of key estate rivals like the Vauxhall Astra (500 litres) and Ford Focus (476), and only a little way behind the new class leader, the Peugeot 308 SW (610).

The Ceed's impressive capacity has also been bought without sacrificing the spare wheel – though it is a space saver rather than full size.

What impressed me most though was living with the car. I drove 400 miles in two days, the kind of test that can highlight every little

irritation and niggle, but only proved how the Koreans try to think ahead of issues – I felt fresh as a daisy at the end of my jaunt.

A possible drawback for some though is the Sportswagon's fairly limited engine range versus its hatchback sister.

It comprises two diesels: one 89bhp 1.4-litre – offered on the entry model only – or a 126bhp 1.6 tested here. Both come with six-speed manual gearboxes as standard, with an six-speed auto available on the 1.6.

I'd say that the 1.4's leisurely 0-62mph in 13.4 seconds rules it out for anyone thinking of using the Ceed's impressive load lugging capacity – pile in the family and its baggage and you'll add many more

## Kia Ceed 3 1.6 CRDI Sportswagon

Price:	£12,810
Driving appeal:	★★★★
Image:	★★★★★
Space:	★★★★
Value:	★★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★★
Reliability:	★★★★
How green?:	★★★★
Road tax:	zero
Best rival:	VW Up

## Kent dealers

<b>Canterbury Kia</b>	
Canterbury	01622 238373
<b>Hidsons</b>	
Gillingham	01634 624 166
Gravesend	01474 444 186
<b>Harbour Garage</b>	
Whitstable	01227 671124

## FirstGEAR

Motoring news



## Big Volvo a big hit

VOLVO'S all-new XC90 got off to a flying start with 55 exclusive First Edition examples sold to UK buyers within hours of the premium SUV being unveiled, but these customers will have to wait until April 2015 for delivery.

Interest in the smart newcomer is huge and can only boost the resurgence of the Swedish brand and its cars, now backed by the financial muscle of Chinese motor group Geely.



## A hatchback star?

NISSAN returns to the family hatchback market this autumn, 10 years after the demise of the Almera.

Its new standard bearer here will be the five-door Pulsar (from £15,995), claimed to offer class-leading comfort and technology and the longest wheelbase (2,700mm) in its sector – factors that Nissan hopes will attract downsizers from bigger car segments.

Designed and engineered for Europe, it is being built at Nissan's Barcelona factory.



## Outlander top dog

INDUSTRY figures show Mitsubishi's Outlander PHEV is now Britain's best-selling plug-in hybrid.

The family size SUV's appeal is due to affordability – from £27,707 after deduction of a £5,000 Government grant – and being able to travel 32.5 miles on battery power alone, making it ideal for an eco-friendly local commute.

Its petrol-electric powertrain also emits a road tax exempt 44g/km of CO<sub>2</sub> and offers 148mpg (combined cycle).



**TO ADVERTISE:**

TELEPHONE: **0845 671 4460** EMAIL: **appointments@kosmedia.co.uk** ONLINE: **www.jobs24.co.uk/kent**



**BRADSTOW SCHOOL**  
**DEPUTY HEAD OF CARE**

Bradstow School is a residential special school situated in Broadstairs, Kent and it is maintained by the London Borough of Wandsworth. Bradstow School recognises the importance of supporting, training and developing its staff to enable them to deliver an outstanding service for children and young people.

A Deputy Head of Care is required to lead and supervise the childcare provision of the registered children's home provision for the children and young people who currently attend Bradstow School. The successful candidate will have proven managerial and leadership skills, and a knowledge of supporting children and young people with learning disabilities, autism and associated challenging behaviours.

The Deputy Head of Care will be a member of the Senior Leadership Team and will contribute to the continuous improvement of the school and actively promote and model the vision, values and mission of the school community.

The successful candidate will have achieved QCF Level 5 (Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care and Children and Young People Services), or equivalent, and a willingness to successfully complete within 18 months of commencement of employment.

**£34,894 - £37,578 per annum (plus sleeping in allowance) – 41 hours per week.**  
**Term Time Only, plus 2 weeks.**

If you want to work within a creative and dynamic team who really make a difference to the lives of the children and young people at Bradstow School, and you want to help lead this exciting provision, then this is the opportunity for you.

We are committed to sustainability and preserving the environment and therefore encourage applications by email. For an application form and information pack please email [personnel@bradstow.wandsworth.sch.uk](mailto:personnel@bradstow.wandsworth.sch.uk). Or you may call 01843 608727 (24 hour recruitment answer machine).

Please note that CVs will not be considered.

The closing date for all applications is 5pm Thursday 25th September 2014.



**"We grow people"**

Abbey Court School provides a stimulating, challenging and safe learning environment where pupils and staff efforts, work and achievement are celebrated.

We are currently looking for a

**Music Therapist**

to join and enhance our high calibre team

**Medway Scale B2 – point 32 to 41 (£27,323 to £34,894)**  
**(5 days per week, term time only - pro rata)**

Abbey Court School is currently located on 2 sites; Rainham (Nursery and Primary) and Strood (Secondary and Further Education), and caters for pupils aged 3-19 with Severe Learning Difficulties. We are looking for an enthusiastic and experienced Music Therapist, with a professional and flexible approach. In essence, somebody with an interest in an educational setting who would like to work in a school committed to enabling pupils to reach their full potential. The postholder will be offered the opportunity to express their creativity, work holistically and demonstrate their strengths whilst undertaking a wide variety of tasks within the post.

Working hours are 37 hours p/w, term time only. Candidates should hold a relevant Music Therapy qualification. The successful candidate will work as part of a larger therapy team, alongside Physiotherapist, Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist and Art Therapist. Benefits include: Local Authority pension scheme, induction training, performance management programme and Continuous Professional Development. Visits to the school are welcomed.

Due to the conditions and complex needs of the pupils at Abbey Court School, continuity and consistency of support is paramount and therefore candidates for all positions will need to commit to the full working hours of the post.

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Any offer of appointment for post is subject to a satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure.

Closing Date: 26th September 2014

For an application pack, or to make an appointment to visit, please contact Mrs Linda Taylor, Business Manager, Abbey Court School, Rede Court Road, Strood, Kent, ME2 3SP (01634 338236), stating the position for which you are applying.

Please note CVs will not be accepted

**Care Staff**

CUMBRIA HOUSE CARE HOME  
requires

**Senior Night  
Care Assistant**

For Monday and Tuesday nights 8pm – 8am  
Must have NVQ/QCF Level 3 in Health & Social care  
and have experience in position of senior care assistant  
Position is subject to Enhanced DBS check,  
cost to be met by applicant

For more information, please contact

**Julia or Cathy on 01303 254019**

**Drivers**

**HGV1/2 Drivers**

Great opportunity for permanent class 1 work.  
Potential earnings of £35,000 +  
Permanent work plus overtime and weekend working.

Driver/ Hiab Operator  
(Will Hiab Train if you do not hold certification)  
Required; Digital Tachograph Card,  
current CPC qualification card and  
CPCS card.  
Full PPE & uniform provided.  
To apply email [riglift@riglift.co.uk](mailto:riglift@riglift.co.uk)  
or telephone 01322 341166



Spencer Private Hospitals are two hospitals situated in East Kent. The larger of the two hospitals is a 22 bed independent hospital situated at the QEOM Hospital in Margate, whilst the second hospital is a 4 bed independent hospital based at the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford. Both hospitals have a reputation for providing excellent medical and surgical facilities supported by Specialist Consultants, Specialist Nurses and Physiotherapists. We have state of the art diagnostic equipment and exceptionally high standards of nursing care.

The continuing growth of our business has resulted in vacancies for the following staff

**DEPUTY THEATRE LIAISON MANAGER - MARGATE**

Full Time - Hours: 37.5 - Salary: £34K - £38K

- Registered Nurse or Operating Department Practitioner
- Five years relevant experience in Theatre
- Evidence of Continual Professional Development
- Experience of managing a team
- Sound knowledge of Clinical Governance and Risk Management
- A working knowledge of CQC regulations and requirements
- Ability to manage a Theatre department

**ENDOSCOPY MANAGER - MARGATE**

Full Time (Part Time Considered) - Hours: 37.5  
Salary: £30K - £36K pa or pro rata for part-time

- Registered Nurse Part 1 or equivalent ODP qualification
- In depth knowledge of CFPP 01-06
- Knowledge of GRS/JAG Accreditation
- Two years experience in Managerial Endoscopy role
- Skilled in all endoscopy procedures and processes
- A Working knowledge of CQC regulations and requirements

**ENDOSCOPY PRACTITIONERS (RGN/ODP) - MARGATE**

Full or Part time - Hours: Various - Salary: £25,000 pa or pro rata for part time

- We are looking for enthusiastic, experienced, highly motivated endoscopy staff at all levels, with a flexible approach to working. Hours will include evenings and weekends
- Registered Nurse or Operating Department Practitioner
  - Relevant experience working in an Endoscopy Unit
  - Knowledge of research and evidence-based practice
  - Experienced in Recovery and Anaesthetics
  - Skilled in scope cleaning and decontamination processes
  - Able to assist in therapeutic procedures
  - Data collection ICT skills
  - Ability to assess, plan and evaluate patient care

**REGISTERED NURSES seeking Endoscopy opportunity**

Full time - Hours: 37.5 - Salary: Dependent upon experience

Are you a qualified registered nurse seeking a new career path? Are you looking to train as an Endoscopy Practitioner? If so, Spencer Private Hospitals may be able to provide that training opportunity to develop your skills whilst working in a friendly and professional environment. For the right candidate, Spencer Private Hospitals will provide a comprehensive training package leading to certification as an Endoscopy Practitioner

To discuss these opportunities, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact:  
Dennis Sutton, Theatre Liaison Manager, on 07822 237881

**CLOSING DATE FOR ALL THE ABOVE POSITIONS - 26/09/2014**

For a job description and application form please visit [www.spencerprivatehospitals.com/careers](http://www.spencerprivatehospitals.com/careers)  
Alternatively, please contact Emily Fraser, HR Assistant telephone: 01304 245951

E-mail: [recruitment@spencerhospitals.com](mailto:recruitment@spencerhospitals.com)

Spencer Private Hospital is an equal opportunity employer.  
This position is subject to a Disclosure and Barring check.







**Westlands School**  
Westlands Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 1PF  
A member of Swale Academies Trust

## SCIENCE TECHNICIAN

Required for November 2014

35 hours per week, term time only

Salary starting at £16,468 - £17,302 pa (pro-rata) (equal to £12,846- £13,497)

We seek to appoint a suitably qualified Science Technician who will be responsible for providing technical support in science subjects (KS3, KS4, A Level, BTEC) and to coordinate the use of practical resources and facilities in the Science Department.

Applicants should have knowledge of COSHH and relevant science qualification. Previous experience of working in a Science department, School or commercial laboratory would be useful.

Duties will include:

- running trials of experiments prior to classes and then demonstrating techniques for experiments;
- preparing equipment and chemicals before lessons – from test tubes to microscopes;
- maintaining and repairing equipment and laboratory apparatus;
- ensuring that equipment is properly cleaned and that chemicals and other materials are appropriately stored;
- ensuring that all health and safety procedures are understood and followed correctly;

Ofsted 2012

**Achievement is outstanding | Teaching is outstanding | Behaviour is outstanding | Leadership is outstanding**

Recruitment packs are available from Westlands School or online ([www.swaleacademiestrust.org.uk](http://www.swaleacademiestrust.org.uk)). Please note, we cannot accept CVs without an application form. Closing date: 26 September 2014 (noon). Interviews will take place in the week beginning 29 September 2014

Swale Academies Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check.

### Contact Details

Tel: 01795 477475 Fax: 01795 479461 Email [swa@westlands.kent.sch.uk](mailto:swa@westlands.kent.sch.uk)

Headteacher: Mr S Cox MA Trust Principal: Mr J Whitcombe MA

Swale Academies Trust Company No 7344732

Registered Office: Ashdown House, Johnson Road, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 1JS



**The Kent Police and Crime Commissioner and Kent Police recognise that officers and staff are the Force's greatest asset, and they need to act with integrity at all times to ensure public confidence in policing**

To help sustain this, we want to establish an Ethics Committee. This will consider ethical issues and advise and support decision making by the Chief Constable in relation to complex policing issues; debate complex operational or personnel issues; be proactive in challenging Kent Police on themes of national significance; and influence police culture

We are looking for exceptional individuals who have knowledge and understanding of ethical principles and a relevant qualification and / or proven experience working in an area with a clear ethical dimension

As we are keen to recruit people with a different perspective, you cannot apply if you have previously worked, or currently work, with or for Kent Police or the Office of the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner in any way

Details of the role profiles, vetting requirements, and how to apply can be found on the Commissioner's website: <http://www.kent-pcc.gov.uk/home.php?category=News>

Closing date: Monday 29th September at midday

Interviews: Monday 27th and Tuesday 28th October

An induction will be held for successful candidates in November

The first meeting will be on the 10th December

To discuss please contact Laura Steward on: 01622 677055



## BRADSTOW SCHOOL

Bradstow is a creative and unique residential school for children between the ages of 5 & 19. It is situated in 13 acres of parkland just a few hundred metres from the sandy beaches of Broadstairs. We seek to meet the needs of children and young people with autism and severe learning difficulties with associated behaviours that may be challenging. We have achieved national recognition for our developments in Communication and Behaviour Management.

## QCF ASSESSOR

To deliver vocational qualifications, coaching and assessment of learners in accordance with the National Standards using a range of assessment methods. The successful candidate will hold a Childcare Qualification Level III or above, the A1 Assessor Award with QCF Update and PTTLs.

£20,726 - £22,314 per annum - 37 hours per week – Term Time Only, plus 2 weeks\*

\*For these roles there will also be up to a maximum of two weeks for the school's respite care provision if required, for which extra payment would be paid.

For all posts we look for candidates who are mature, warm, creative and open to learning with a patient and caring attitude to deal sensitively with vulnerable children.

We are committed to sustainability and preserving the environment and therefore encourage applications by email, so for an application form and information pack please email [personnel@bradstow.wandsworth.sch.uk](mailto:personnel@bradstow.wandsworth.sch.uk). Or you may call 01843 608727 (24 hour recruitment answer machine).

Please note that CVs will not be considered.

The closing date for all applications is 5pm Thursday 25th September 2014.

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in paper, online and  
on your mobile



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## Swale Academies Trust



### Westlands School

Westlands Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 1PF

## Teaching Assistants

Required for immediate start

Salary £13,512 - £16,468 (pro rata)  
(equal to £8,155 to £9,940 pa depending on experience)

27.08 hours per week, worked over 5 days, term time only,  
supporting pupils in mainstream classes.

Applicants should have the necessary skills to support pupils who have various difficulties in mainstream classes, in small groups or on an individual basis. A particular interest in the areas of mathematics, science or humanities would be an advantage. Candidates would be expected to have good literacy and numeracy skills, and as part of the interview, may be asked to demonstrate their skills in supporting pupils.

Recruitment packs are available from Westlands School or online ([www.westlands.org.uk](http://www.westlands.org.uk)). Please note that we cannot accept CVs without an application form. Applicants should include a letter of application detailing how they meet the requirements of the person specification. Closing date: Friday 26 September 2014 at noon.

Swale Academies Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check.

### Contact Details

Tel: 01795 477475 Fax: 01795 479461

Email [swa@westlands.kent.sch.uk](mailto:swa@westlands.kent.sch.uk)

Headteacher: Mr S Cox MA

Trust Principal: Mr J Whitcombe MA



Swale Academies Trust Company No 7344732

Registered Office: Ashdown House, Johnson Road, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 1JS

## PLANNING



### THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2010

The following applications have been submitted for consideration by the Council:

**Y14/0891/SH** - Tournay Hall High Street Lydd Romney Marsh Kent - Erection of two detached dwelling houses, together with parking and landscaping.

**Y14/0327/SH\*** - Cinderella Farm Burmarsh Road Hythe Kent CT21 4NJ - Continued use of the land as a public nine hole pitch and putt golf course, together with the construction of an associated parking area and clubhouse (affects a Public Right of Way).

**Y14/0660/SH#** - West Lawn Lydd Road New Romney Kent TN28 8DH - Erection of a detached dwelling following demolition of the existing outbuildings

**Y14/0965/SH** - 27 High Street New Romney Kent TN28 8BN - Listed building consent for the erection of a single storey rear extension and internal ground floor alterations

**Y14/0544/SH** - 9A & 9B Defiant Close Hawkinge Folkestone Kent CT18 7SU - Variation of condition 11 of Y10/0739/SH (mixed used development comprising the erection of 4, three storey blocks providing 8 ground floor commercial units (Classes A1, A2, A3, B1 uses) and 48, two bedroom apartments above, together with associated access, parking, landscaping and open space.) to include use of ground floor commercial unit in either Block 2, Unit A or Block 3, Units A and B as doctors' surgery (Class D1 use).

**Y14/0992/SH†** - Eaton Lands South Castle Road Hythe Kent - Works to trees situated within a conservation area comprising the pollarding of a Holm Oak (T3) to approximately 8 metres and the pollarding of a Sycamore (T7) to approximately 6 metres

**Y14/0941/SH** - Flat 1 23 - 25 Earls Avenue Folkestone Kent CT20 2HF - Installation of replacement uPVC windows.

**Y14/0826/SH** - Royal Victoria Hospital Radnor Park Avenue Folkestone Kent CT19 5BN - Demolition of warehouse and construction of 14 apartments together with parking.

**Y14/0842/SH** - Land adjoining Concept Court Shearway Road Shearway Business Park Folkestone Kent - Erection of eight buildings (blocks A-H) divided into 31 No units for B1, B2 & B8 class uses.

**Y14/0993/SH\*** - Oaklands Stade Street Hythe Kent - Works to trees situated within a conservation area comprising: Walnut (T5) crown lift to 6 metres above playground; Acer (T6) 2 metre overall crown reduction.

**Y14/0972/SH** - Lambourne Suite The Grand The Leas Folkestone Kent - Listed building consent to install boiler and external flue to East elevation.

Any representations should be made in writing to the Head of Planning, Shepway District Council, Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 2QY or emailed to [planning@shepway.gov.uk](mailto:planning@shepway.gov.uk). Comments should be made in writing within 21 days from the date of publication. It should be noted that any representations received will be made available for public inspection.

Some applications can be viewed at other locations in addition to the Civic Centre, Folkestone. The applications are marked as follows:

# - The One Stop Shop, Magpies, Church Approach, New Romney

† - Hythe Town Council Offices, Stade Street, Hythe

Applications can be viewed and comments made online at <http://searchplanapps.shepway.gov.uk/online-applications/>.

The applications marked (\*) do not accord with the provisions of the development plan in force in the area in which the land to which the application relates is situated.

C Lewis, Head of Planning  
Shepway District Council



To advertise in this section

**0845 671 4460 & 020 8477 3720**

email [appointments@kosmedia.co.uk](mailto:appointments@kosmedia.co.uk)



Spencer Private Hospitals are two hospitals situated in East Kent. The larger of the two hospitals is a 22 bed independent hospital situated at the QEQM Hospital in Margate, whilst the second hospital is a 4 bed independent hospital based at the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford. Both hospitals have a reputation for providing excellent medical and surgical facilities supported by Specialist Consultants, Specialist Nurses and Physiotherapists.

We have state of the art diagnostic equipment and exceptionally high standards of nursing care

The continuing growth of our business has resulted in vacancy for the following staff:

### MARKETING ASSISTANT - DOVER

Full time Hours: 37.5 per week Closing date: 26/09/2014

Salary: £20,000 per annum

#### Qualifications

- Maths and English GCSE A-C or equivalent
- 12 months experience working in a marketing administration environment
- Social Media and Email Marketing experience essential
- Experience of Google Analytics and Adwords
- SEO and PPC experience desirable

• Experience using Umbraco, or other CMS, and MailChimp desirable

To discuss this opportunity, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact:

Justine Whittle, Marketing Assistant, on 01304 245943 or at [justine.whittle@spencerhospitals.com](mailto:justine.whittle@spencerhospitals.com)

For a job description and application form please visit [www.spencerprivatehospitals.com/careers](http://www.spencerprivatehospitals.com/careers)

Alternatively, please contact Emily Fraser, HR Assistant

Telephone: 01304 245951

E-mail: [recruitment@spencerhospitals.com](mailto:recruitment@spencerhospitals.com)

Spencer Private Hospital is an equal opportunity employer

This position is subject to a Disclosure and Barring check





# Shakey is relishing the title battle showdown with his fiercest rivals



**SMILES:** Shane Byrne has a 26-point lead over his nearest superbike rivals



Pictures: ANDY KELLY

## MCE Insurance British Superbike Championship ace takes small lead into the final Showdown stages

**S**HANE 'Shakey' Byrne added two more podium finishes to his season's haul last weekend at Donington Park but again failed to cross the line first, coming second to fellow triple champion Ryuichi Kiyonari in both races.

The Sittingbourne rider was in fine form on his Rapid Solicitors Kawasaki Ninja ZX-10R and, having already sealed his place in the Showdown, was keen to pick up as many Podium Points as possible to ensure he went into the final three rounds with a strong advantage over his Title Fighter rivals.

In front of a big crowd, there was little to separate Byrne and Kiyonari in either of the two 20-lap races, with the pair never more than half a second apart. Byrne led for much of the first race, but the duo swapped places several times towards the end, with the Japanese rider eventually taking a narrow win.

In the second race, BMW rider Kiyonari led from start to finish despite Byrne putting him under pressure throughout.

Again there was little in it, with less than half a second between the two after yet another hard-fought race, Byrne settling for his 18th podium out of the 19 races run so far.

Byrne, 37, now enters the Showdown part of the championship whereby the top six riders are elevated to Title Fighter status, meaning their scores are reset to 500, to which are added the Podium Points that

have been accrued over the season (five for a win, three for second place and one for third).

This all means that Byrne heads to Assen on 562, 26 ahead of Josh Brookes on 536, who in turn is one ahead of Kiyonari.

Byrne said: "The first race was great fun and I really, really enjoyed it. The temperature was hotter than it had been all weekend, so I tried to lead and set a good pace but not one that was too quick so it would damage the tyres for the end of the race.

"When Kiyo came by, I decided to sit on his back wheel and I had a plan to try to beat him, which didn't quite happen.

"I couldn't be that close to him and not have a go, though, so dived up the inside at Goddards on the final lap only to run wide.

"I tried to cut back but was a bit eager on the throttle so had to take second place.

"In the second race, Kiyo set an incredible pace and my plan was to overtake him on the last lap at the Old Hairpin, but I nearly launched myself into orbit coming out of Redgate and that pretty much ended my chances.

"I pushed over the limit to try to close back up to him and while I got close it wasn't close enough.

"It was a bit frustrating not to win this weekend, but I've extended my lead in the Podium Points and we go into the Showdown in a strong position."







## Kitcars and their makers set for return to Brands Hatch for major LIVE event

BRANDS Hatch is hosting totalkitcar LIVE this autumn for the first time in seven years.

Britain's flourishing kitcar industry will be celebrated on Saturday, November 15, with the event's return to the venue after its lengthy absence.

The circuit's off-track areas will be filled with some of the nation's finest kitcars, offering visitors a chance to get a closer look at a plethora of machines.

The diversity of British kitcar-manufacturing will be displayed, with different brands exhibiting wildly contrasting concepts, from Fury Sports Cars and Gardner Douglas Sports Cars, built in the style of classically-modelled roadsters, to XMoore Cars' Ford-EcoBoost-powered sports car.

The list of 28 manufacturers already confirmed to attend will

also include bike-powered Bosa Mini constructed by Mintro Padmore Garage, Bertini with its stylish take on the BMW Z3 and the iconic Westfield Sports Cars.

Displays from kitcar clubs will include the Cobra Replica Club, which will be bringing a large number of cars.

Spectators will be able to enjoy the sights and sounds of these great machines as their performance capabilities are tested out on track.

Passenger laps will be available, allowing visitors to experience the thrills of the Indy circuit in a custom-built vehicle and hopefully be sufficiently encouraged to buy or build one themselves.

When not out on the circuit, the manufacturers will be based in the pit garages, where visitors can meet the men behind the

machines and get a closer look at how they are prepared for track action. Also in the pit lane area will be traders and manufacturers displaying static cars.

Steve Hole, editor of totalkitcar magazine and organiser of the event, said: "We're very pleased that the kitcar industry has shown such enthusiasm for this year's totalkitcar LIVE event."

"The attraction of returning to our spiritual home at Brands Hatch has added an extra element."

"Even though we're still several months away from the November 15 date, most of the pit garages are already booked, which shows just how well totalkitcar LIVE is viewed, both within the industry and by enthusiasts."

For more information, visit [www.brandshatch.co.uk](http://www.brandshatch.co.uk) or phone 0843 453 9000.



## French takes two silvers at pentathlon championships

MEOPHAM athlete Kate French picked up her second silver medal at the Modern Pentathlon World Championships in Warsaw on Sunday last week with a superb display in the mixed relay.

French and team partner Joe Evans performed strongly throughout the day to ensure that the British team ended the tournament on a high note, although they were denied gold by the Lithuanian pair of London 2012 Olympic gold-medallist Laura Asadauskaite and 2013 world champion Justinas Kinderis.

The success meant the Pentathlon GB team returned home with three medals – a gold and two silvers.

French's other silver came as part of the women's modern pentathlon team.



**MEDALS:** Kate French



**RETIRING:** Mark Davies

## Davies calls time on his cricketing

KENT bowler Mark Davies is retiring from cricket after failing to recover from a shoulder injury picked up in a pre-season fixture.

His CV includes two County Championship titles (2008 and 2009) as well as the Friends Provident Trophy and the Natwest Pro40 in 2007, all with Durham.

Injuries, though, proved a problem and Davies moved to Canterbury for the 2012 season, in which he took 36 wickets at 19 runs apiece, earning him the club's Player of the Year award in his debut season.

Last season he took 25 Championship wickets before his serious shoulder injury prevented him from returning for 2014.

## Gills have date set for Colchester tie

GILLINGHAM will play their second-round tie of the Johnstone's Paint Trophy against Colchester United on Tuesday, October 7.

Peter Taylor's side secured the away clash with a 1-0 win at Stevenage, Luke Norris scoring from the penalty spot, while Colchester received a first-round bye.

## Kent hammered by nine wickets

KENT turned in a grim performance in their LV= County Championship Division Two match at Chelmsford, losing to Essex by nine wickets in a fraction over two days.

Sam Northeast hit 117 and Sam Billings 51 in Kent's first innings of 198, but there was little else positive to be said from a Kent perspective.

## Women take the One-Day Cup

KENT women's cricket team have lifted the Royal London Women's One-Day Cup, topping the table with six wins from the six 50-over matches they played.

Kent and England skipper Charlotte Edwards also led to the side to the T20 Division One finals day, which Nottinghamshire won.

## Advance tickets available for big game

TICKETS for Margate's Ryman Premier League top-of-the-table clash at home to Maidstone United can be bought in advance.

They will be available via [www.margate-fc.co.uk](http://www.margate-fc.co.uk) or at Hartsdown Park from Monday, September 15, to Monday, September 22. The game is played on Tuesday, September 23.

Phone 01843 221769 for details.

Keep up-to-date with all Kent's sports news via social media on:

Twitter @KentSport Facebook [www.facebook.com/kentsport.3](http://www.facebook.com/kentsport.3)

# VAUXHALL SCOOP PURCHASE

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SE 5dr**

## Representative Example

60 Monthly Payments	Cash Price	Deposit	Amount of Credit	Interest Charges
<b>£129.02</b>	<b>£7,100</b>	<b>£129</b>	<b>£6,971</b>	<b>£1,068.30</b>
Total Amount Payable	Borrowing Rate	Representative		
<b>£8,168.30</b>	<b>2.21%</b>	<b>5.9%APR</b>		

Cars shown for illustration purposes only. Finance subject to status, terms and conditions apply. Please ask for further details.

Scan the QR code

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